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Read Notes + Comments

Dorothy L. Graves

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THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The principal aim and object of this Society is to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or color. The subsidiary objects are: The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and the investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this magazine, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an official document.

Theosophy and Christianity

The Theosophical Society recently celebrated its thirty-sixth birthday, and sedately entered its thirty-seventh year. Its life has been full of events, full of blessings for mankind; full also of discords and misunderstandings. Perhaps there has been deeper and more persistent misunderstanding concerning the theme of the present "Notes and Comments" than about any other subject in our checkered and tumultuous history. So that it may be fitting that a little anniversary sermon like this should be devoted to a consideration of the true relation between Theosophy and Christianity. On the one hand, nothing has done more to block our work and chill our welcome than confusion on this one point. On the other, nothing will do more to put new life into our movement than a real and complete understanding of the relations between these two great powers, so often held to be of necessity inimical to each other. Such a true understanding will mean an immense liberation of power, a crashing of the barriers which have long held us in check, a new period of positive and creative life.

Any complete account of Theosophy and Christianity the writer of these Notes does not pretend to be able to give. Any such claim would, in a mortal, be flat presumption, since so much of divinity went into the making of both, such a sweep of high powers and angelic forces, that none not of the immortals could comprehend or chronicle. But we make up in fidelity and close application for what we lack in breadth and soaring insight; we may attain results valid within their scope, though far from exhaustive, by sticking close to what we ourselves have verified; by taking illustrations from our own immediate experience.

The Theosophical Society has, as we said, entered its thirty-seventh year. The writer of these Notes first heard of the Society about the time it was celebrating its ninth birthday, and joined its ranks some six months

later. So that this little anniversary sermon will be based on an experience of many years, an experience extended, by the grace of Karmic opportunity, from the Ganges to the Pacific Ocean, and including immediate knowledge of all the outstanding persons who have helped to make the Society's eventful history.

With such an experience as basis, what generalization do we reach as to Theosophy and the general work and scope of the Theosophical Society? To the writer of the present Notes, the following generalization commends itself: The Theosophical Society is founded on a new conception of Truth, a conception at once so original and so novel, so simple and so deep, that it is small wonder that it has not been more universally recognized, that so many have held that the essence of our movement consists in something else, whether it be a doctrine or a system or a principle. Small wonder that so many, approaching the Theosophical Society with all kinds of preconceptions and mental crystalizations, have mistaken its purpose and foundation, and have plunged into activities and exertions which, to say the least of it, have not always tended to the growth and forwarding of the movement.

A new conception of Truth, at once deep and simple, far-reaching and fundamental. Let us illustrate by citing in contrast two older conceptions of Truth which have pretty well divided Christendom between them, these two thousand years. Take, for example, the Catholic system of theology, which, it has been held for centuries, gives a complete account of the universe, and which anyone not only may, but must, understand and accept, on pain of lasting punishment in both worlds. One comes close to the truth if one says that the general opinion of educated Roman Catholics would affirm that the whole of truth is contained in the books of Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor; and, more than that, whatever is not contained in these books is presumably false. The whole of Modernism is, indeed, nothing but a protest against that idea. The orthodox reaction against Modernism is practically an affirmation of the thought that the whole of Christian truth could be contained, and was contained, in the mind of a single man.

On the other hand, it was the firm belief of a great number of those who took part in the Reformation and in the religious movements that flowed out of it, that the whole of Christian truth, which meant the whole of the truth which any wise man would concern himself with, was contained in the mind and in the books, not of Thomas Aquinas but of John Calvin. And in either case this conviction was no mere pious opinion, which one had the option of holding or not holding. On the contrary, a failure to agree, and to affirm one's agreement, was a burning matter on either side, as Giordano Bruno and Servetus learned. In either case,

and in unnumbered martyrdoms, whether bodily or mental, there was the same fundamental thought: that truth is a simple thing, which can be known by a single mind, contained in a single book or a single head, and the deduction that failure to grasp and affirm this simple thing meant a moral rather than a mental deficiency.

But we of the Theosophical Society have our base on a principle in complete contrast with this. We do not hold that Truth, the whole of Truth, can be held in a single mind, stated by a single tongue, recorded in a single book. We hold rather, implicitly perhaps, for many of us, rather than as a fully realized opinion, that Truth can only be grasped when it is approached by many minds, from many points of view, working harmoniously together, yet each with its own original and independent vision. In the belief of the writer of these Notes, it is some such principle as this, some such conception of Truth, that is the vitalizing principle of the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical movement.

Take a simple illustration. Take one of those globes which are used to impress incredulous school-children that the earth is round, not flat. If one looks directly at London, one cannot see, let us say, Australia or the Pacific, or the Antarctic regions, or great spaces of America. On the other hand, if one looks at Mexico, the whole of Asia becomes invisible. Look down directly on the North Pole, and the equatorial regions and all below them vanish. Turn the globe over, and view the white continent of the South, and nearly the whole land surface of the earth disappears from view. No need to multiply illustrations. It is already quite clear that there is no single point of view from which one can see such a simple thing as a child's globe as it really is. Much more, there is no one point of view from which one can see its prototype, the big, round world. How, then, can any mind of man, looking from a single view-point, comprehend God's vast universe as it is, as God Himself beholds it in its mystery?

But if we had half a dozen observers looking at our child's globe, one viewing it from the North, another from the South, while the four others looked at four points on the equator, ninety degrees of longitude apart, and if we could combine their six views into a single complex consciousness, then, indeed, we should have something more nearly approaching a true view of the globe, a view of it as it really is, a view of its true and essential being.

Let that stand as a symbol of the Theosophical conception of Truth. We can only get a glimpse of the true, the real, a glimpse of essential Truth, when we gather together many views in one, taking them from points of view as diverse as possible, in as many lights as possible, with

widely contrasted observers, and then combining the whole into a harmonious composite picture, viewed by that composite, collective consciousness. For this purpose, to form this collective perceiving consciousness, we should have representatives of widely different races, since each race means a new insight into life and nature, a new opening through which the Great Mystery may be viewed. Widely differing temperaments and tempers should also be included, the whole range of human faculty, so that our orchestral range of perceiving consciousness might be complete, or, at least, as complete as might be, since some races, with their secrets, have vanished out of life.

But we can command many points of view: the analytic Western, the synthetic Eastern; the practical, the contemplative; the scientific, the devotional. And here we must allow ourselves a seeming digression, to consider the difference of view and faculty between men and women. It seems to us that there are three classes of human activities: those which men alone can accomplish, or which they can accomplish conspicuously better, such as a cavalry charge, or carrying bricks on a hod up a ladder, a job from which even militant suffragettes would shrink. Then there are things the two sexes can compass equally well, such as playing the organ, or tapping the typewriter. Then there are the things which women do conspicuously better than men; and we have not in mind the nurture of infants, which birds do, on the whole, quite as successfully, but rather such high matters as religious contemplation, holiness, the virtues of devotion and obedience. If we are right, women should have such experience of spiritual life, that they could speak of spiritual reality and spiritual law with the same certainty of touch with which men speak of physical reality and natural law; nay, should not only be able to speak of these things, but should live them, in splendid certainty of immortal life. Women, who nowadays are losing the secret of rearing mortal children, should be able to inspire the immortals, should build the "house not made with hands" with the same sure faith as the bricklayer, who rears the towering wall of the visible dwelling, laying not one brick amiss out of thousands. Woman should be able to preside over the birth, growth and development of the spiritual man, breathing into him devotion, and nurturing him with her prayers. Look out of the window at any city: men have set every brick and stone of every house in place. Where is the spiritual building of the women, planned and reared with like fidelity?

One need hardly ask the question. It is too patent to all eyes that women as a class, least of all the women of the Western world, not only have no sure knowledge of the birth, growth, life of the spiritual man, but they have no inkling that there is any such knowledge, or that it is their privilege, and their duty to possess it, while their failure to

recognize and supply this crying need, the deepest need of life, is one of the most disastrous elements in the condition of the world to-day. Would that even a few might see the futility, the fatuity, of duplicating the already fairly accomplished activities of men, and set themselves to the search after those high and holy things which they could do supremely well.

We need, therefore, for our ideal view of life, the executive-intellectual mind of man and the contemplative-spiritual soul of woman. Neither can at all be dispensed with, and, as we have already clearly said, the second is to-day far more grievously lacking than the first, with the resultant materialism which all decry, but few do much to remedy. The failure of women to do their part, to know and foster the life of the spiritual man, is the chief cause of our cheap view of life, our low ideals, our lack of inspiration, of devotion: our deficiency in all the qualities that should open to us the door of future promise. We need the two views, therefore, the masculine and the feminine, as we need the view of the transcendental Eastern and the dynamic Western mind, the thought both of simple races and of those most highly cultivated. All are necessary. All must be drawn together in a nucleus of collective consciousness, the supreme noëtic instrument for piercing the mystery of the Soul.

It is a truism of our day that the collective will, the energic corporate entity, has proved itself immensely more powerful than the individual man. So much is this so, that, in this country to-day, there is but one problem among all parties: how to direct the corporate will so as to take advantage of its wonderful power, and yet to safeguard the individual against the encroachments and excesses of that power. All discussions of the Sherman law, the Trusts, labor unions, are but varying expressions of this one theme, which will fill the electoral declarations of all our parties during the coming year, and for many years.

We have in view a corporate noëtic instrument, a collective consciousness made up of many diverse elements, just as the collective will of many individuals forms the corporate productive instrument, and is by all recognized to be incomparably effective. And this purpose and intent, the formation of such a collective noëtic consciousness, has been implicit in the work of the Theosophical Society ever since its First Object was formulated. That Object is, "to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, caste, color or sex"; to form, in other words, a corporate noëtic instrument, of elements as varied, as sharply contrasted, as representative as possible, elements drawn from many races and creeds, men and women alike. An instrument which shall be as much more potent than the single seeking mind, as the Trusts are than their weak individual competitors.

For it is evident that the separate person has well nigh reached the limit of his noëtic power. Take an illustration. The trotting horse, after many years of careful selection and training, has at last succeeded in trotting a mile in about two minutes. It is practically certain that no horse will ever trot a mile in a minute and a half. The inherent limitations of the organism are against it. In the same way, the athletes have brought the time for running the hundred yards down first to eleven seconds, then, by a fifth of a second in a decade, to ten seconds, and to nine and four-fifths, with a contested record of nine and three-fifths. It is practically certain that no man will ever run a hundred yards in seven seconds. Again, the organism has inherent, insuperable limitations. So with the personal man, whether as a doing or a knowing power; he has nearly reached the end of his string.

Remains the noëtic power of the collective soul, a thing as real and definite as the dynamic power of the corporate will, the Trust so-called, which everyone recognizes, though, so far as we know, the Theosophical Society alone clearly speaks for the noëtic collective soul, and thus stands firm on the path of the splendid and inevitable future. And we may say, in parenthesis, that we have here a certain test, to distinguish between the central stream of the Theosophic Movement, and its overflows and backwashes. Where we see the noëtic collective soul understood and worked toward, there we have the true current of the Theosophical Society. But where we see the individual authority, whether it be the emotional enthusiast, or the watery-eyed psychic, who hops about on the teaching perch, and drools forth pretended revelations about lost or non-existent worlds, then we have the backwash, the imitation, the mere copy of by-gone and outworn years.

But let us consider the noëtic collective soul in action, beginning with a simple case. There are conditions, just as there are in the formation of a musical group, beginning with a string quartette and culminating in a symphony orchestra with a full choir. The first condition is, that each of those who go to make up the collective soul must have found himself or herself to some degree, must have found spiritual life, have found the soul. Students just beginning to finger the violin would not strengthen the quartette or the orchestra. Their time is not yet. So with the search for the soul. There must be stability, poise, some mastery of life, the power to swim amid the waves of the world.

Then there must be a proper subordination and adjustment of each to the collective soul. In the orchestra, some confusion would result, to put it mildly, if the French horn were suddenly smitten with a desire to play a solo, or if the bass drum, having composed a little piece of his own, determined offhand to favor the company with it. Solos are

admirable and beautiful in their place, but symphonic playing is not that place. Yet, in a sense, every one of the four-score in a full orchestra must have it in him to play a fairly decent solo, or he has no place there at all.

So with the collective soul which the Theosophical Society seeks to form, that "nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity" which is the supreme noëtic instrument of the future. And one may say, again in parenthesis, that this defined purpose is as different from vague general friendliness as that precise and definite thing, a symphony orchestra, is from a vague feeling that music is pleasant and delectable. There are, in both, quite simple, quite imperative conditions: first, that each member must be a valid, independent individual, faithfully obeying his own law; and, secondly, that these individuals must combine in a certain way, to form a collective power, which will be able to accomplish ends and attain results that no individual could conceivably reach.

So we have our valid individuals. Further, each must be willing to say what he really knows, and, as stuff of the conscience, abstain from saying what he does not know. To come to our simple instance. Not long ago, four people sought to put this method into practice, to form a collective consciousness, and therewith to come to some understanding and expression of the life of the soul. The first to speak was a man who had been deeply engaged in Church work, but, disappointed in his ideals, had given it up and plunged into practical charities. He said: "I believe spiritual life consists in service." The second speaker was a woman, blind, who had been tried in many afflictions. She said, "I believe spiritual life is joy." The third said: "Whenever I think of spiritual life, I feel myself immortal. It is like knowing that I am awake, hard to prove, yet the basis of everything. I believe spiritual life is immortality." The fourth speaker said: "I believe spiritual life rests on communion with the Masters, with the Master who stands immediately above each in the upward path of life." Thus did each say what he had of positive to say, abstaining from all negation, from saying things unexperienced or unknown.

Now gather these rays in a focus. Take the synthesis of these four expressions, the word of that collective soul: "Spiritual life rests on communion with the Master, it carries the consciousness of immortality, it fits for service and is full of joy:" a deep and luminous approach to the great Mystery, but to be gained only on the conditions stated. Thus, had each speaker allowed himself negative as well as positive statement, we might have had one saying: "Spiritual life is service, but has nothing to do with Masters or immortality;" or another adding: "Spiritual life means obedience to the Master, but that service is devoid of joy," thus mingling manifest truth with as manifest error.

Those who follow this way, vividly realize that each of us has only his part of truth. Priceless golden particles are in the hearts of others, of all about us, to be had for the asking. All must be gathered, to make the crown of life. But we must be ready to stand aside, to listen, to seek the other's truth, rather than to insist on our own truth. And this requires a high degree of detachment, of sympathy, of humility, first to keep ourselves back, and then to reach forth in heart, and veritably to receive and entertain the soul of the other, making his treasure ours, and doubling its value to him by our receiving it. For all spiritual powers are, like the quality of mercy, twice blest: to him who gives and to him who takes.

This power to stand aside and listen is so essential that it is worth illustrating abundantly. Take an instance, in this case a ridiculous one, that it may adhere the better in our memories. Let us suppose that one begins the day with a funny story, say such a one as this: "A cyclist was overtaken by dusk at a point where three roads met. In the gloom he saw a post with a dim inscription. He shinned painfully up the post, struck a match and read, 'Wet Paint!'" Not a bad story in its way; at least sufficient for our end. Let us suppose such a one, primed with his story, to meet a friend, likewise so primed, who button-holes him, and, with gurglings of premature mirth, exudes a story of his own. Now our first friend does one of two things: either he puts his own story aside, hiding it in his cheek, so to say, and, listening with all his ears, breaks forth at the climacteric moment of the other's story into happy hilarity, and so gains a tale and confirms a friendship; or, on the other hand, he knits his brows, and repeats to himself, with heart of gloom, "When will the idiot get done, so that I can tell him my story of Wet Paint, and reap admiration and praise?"

Pursue such a one through the day, and suppose him to meet a score of jovial friends, each rejoicing in a jest of his own, and eager to impart it. In the one case, our friend makes twenty men happy by his glad hearing of them, and adds twenty stories to his own original one; in the other, he returns at night to his domicile, sour and disappointed, leaving a trail of woe behind, and, as for his one story, with the paint pretty well rubbed off.

A trite instance, but a great truth, the perception of which gave birth to the definition: "A true gentleman is one who always laughs at your funny story, and never says he heard it before." In just the same way, one who goes forth of a morning, with some little spark of truth about life in his heart, may come home at night enriched with a score of new truths, and may, by his right hearing have added riches to the truth in a score of other hearts. For truth is ever enriched by right

hearing. But, to make the result more perfect, each one of the score should also profit by all the others, so that in each heart there might be a synthesis of many-sided truth. To accomplish this, we should have to gather the score together in a single assembly, so that each might speak forth the truth that is in him, and, even more vital, add to his own truth the truth in all the others, thus bringing the collective consciousness to bear, as many lamps are united in the gloom-piercing beam of a light-house.

This is exactly what should be done by a Branch of the Theosophical Society, which should be the field for the preparation and growth of a collective consciousness, a corporate noëtic instrument like a compound beam of light. And this is exactly what has been done, and is done at each meeting, by a Branch of the Theosophical Society, to which the inditer of these Notes has the honor to belong. That Branch, seeking the synthetic view of truth, has, in that way, most fruitfully studied many themes: for example, the New Testament, Buddhism, Hinduism, the religion of China, the aim and purpose of the Theosophical Society, as expressed in its Constitution and history, or as related to ethics, to science, to religion, to social life.

It will be a natural bridge to the second part of our theme, Theosophy and Christianity, if we consider some of the results reached by the Branch in question, when it came to study the New Testament and the Christian religion. We began with the documents. Taking a general view of them, from the standpoint of many temperaments, we came to see that they may be considered, among other ways, as being the record of many views, by men of widely contrasted temperament, of the towering figure of the Master whose inspiration gives the whole collection of documents their life. We have, for example, in the two letters of Peter, one view of the Master, given by the ardent and impulsive friend, who loved rather than understood; in the gospel of Matthew, we have the record of a man predisposed to legalism, by nature a theologian, with a tendency toward ecclesiastical speculation; in the gospel of John, the view of a born mystic, who both loved and understood, who was very close to the heart and consciousness of the Master; then secondary testimony, like that of Mark, a Cypriote and the cousin of Barnabas, who spent years with the first disciples at Jerusalem, while the great events and greater inspiration were still vivid in their minds and hearts; Mark gives us a simple, naturalistic view, limited by the limitations of his own mind; another secondary view is that of Luke, the man of letters, the eloquent biographer, whose sense of style has preserved for us such treasures as the parable of the Prodigal Son, with its wonderful climax: "I will arise and go to my father;" or that marvellous speech to Simon the Pharisee, which is the most eloquent antithesis in any lan-

guage: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." To Luke's fine literary sense we owe also the preservation of the story of the good Samaritan, and the Pharisee and the publican, with their masterly dramatic characterization of three universal human types.

To these we must add two views, the more important, because they form a link between the days of that Master's work in the world with his first disciples, and his later work, in the spiritual body, after he had laid the vesture of the flesh aside. First of these two witnesses is Paul, the fiery antagonist who was transformed into the fiery advocate by the touch of the Master himself, appearing to him in the spiritual body, on the Damascus road, and instructing him in detail of the Master's plan to open to the whole world the body of his disciples, which, up till that time, had been made up almost wholly of Jews, Galileans, men of his own locality, all speaking the same tongue. Paul's testimony shows how the Master came to him, and gave him clear, explicit instruction, first on the road to Damascus, then at Antioch, then at Corinth, when Paul was hard-pressed and well-nigh despairing, then at Jerusalem, when Paul was in instant danger of assassination, and finally at Rome, where Paul was on trial before the judgment seat of Nero: "At my first answer, no man stood with me but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their charge! Notwithstanding, the Master stood with me, and strengthened me."

Yet another witness, this time one of the Master's family, his younger brother James. The fourth evangelist lets us see that, even on the eve of the Master's last journey to Jerusalem, his brothers, with this James at their head, not only did not believe in his power or count themselves among his followers, but even mocked at his claims, taunting him, and daring him to go to Jerusalem to prove them. But very shortly after, when Paul visited Jerusalem for the first time after he had seen the Master near Damascus, we find this same James, the Master's brother, among the chiefest leaders of the disciples and their following; we find him equal in authority with Peter and John, the elder of the disciples and the beloved disciple, and even exercising a certain dominance over the impulsive and changeable spirit of Peter. Thus, at the Council of Jerusalem, when the question of opening the

assembly of disciples to those who were not Jews, whether by birth or conversion, was formally settled, the decision of the Council was declared, not by Peter, but by James, the brother of the Master.

Almost by accident we learn, from a chance phrase of Paul's, that, just as the Master had appeared in the spiritual body to Paul, so he had appeared, at an earlier time, and therefore very shortly after his death and resurrection, to his own brother James, the son of Joseph and Mary, and that this appearance had transformed the whole view, the heart and mind, of James, just as the more widely known meeting of the Master with Paul, on the Damascus road, transformed the heart and life of the future apostle of the Gentiles. So we have, in Paul's history and letters, the recorded view of one who knew the Master only in the spiritual body; while, in what we know of James, the Master's younger brother, we have the view of one whose sight had been at first obscured by his very closeness to the Master, who, for him, was literally the "prophet without honor among his own kin." And, from these seven records, made by men of widely different temperaments and characters, we can gain a synthetic view of the Master, as seen by their collective consciousness, and thus having a truth, a depth, a relief, a reality, which no single view could ever give. We have, in fact, just such a synthetic view as we suggested in the case of the globe of the world, viewed at once from the four points of the compass, from the zenith and nadir.

We therefore gain this great insight into our records of that Master: an insight which solves many of the difficulties raised by what is called the Higher Criticism. For example the critics of that school have held that the different views of the Master, presented in the records attributed to Mark, Luke, Matthew and John, represent four successive views gradually developed through a period of two or three generations; but we see that their differences are precisely such as we should expect when the same great personage is viewed simultaneously by four men of markedly different temperaments, which we have tentatively described as naturalistic, literary, ecclesiastical and mystical; just such differences as we constantly meet in the actual application of the Theosophical method, the operation of the noëtic collective consciousness.

Great as is the light which our collective noëtic method thus sheds on the figure of that Master as depicted by our records, the light which the same method sheds on his work is even greater. What do our records show that the Master did? He chose a group of disciples, drawing them forth from the multitudes who followed him, and requiring, as the necessary condition of his teaching, that they should turn from the worldly pursuits in which they were engaged, and come to him. Thereafter, for two or three years, he kept them constantly close to him,

taking them with him in his journeys up and down the road which stretches from Galilee, under the mount of Samaria, to Jerusalem. During the greater part of this time, the disciples walked with their Master, slept under the same roof with him, crossed the Galilean lake in the same fishing boat, ate with him at the same table, until that culminating supper which he made a symbol of his whole work and the order of spiritual life he established.

But he did more than bring the disciples outwardly near him, and make them share his daily life. He strove in all possible ways, and with marvellously patient iteration, to make them share the life of his thought, his hopes, his purposes also. "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," he said to his disciples; and he repeated to them times without number the formulas in which he summed up his view of life, sentences such as this, "he that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." Thus he made them sharers of his intellectual life, so far as the limited development of their minds made that possible.

He did this, and something more. He sought in all ways to make them sharers in his life itself, the life of his soul, his spirit, his consciousness, his aspiration, his will. And this, not merely in the sense that he sought to make them feel and think the things which he felt and thought, but in a far deeper and more immediate sense; he sought to bring them into his very life, to make them share it from moment to moment, forming with him a single corporate life, a collective consciousness and will, of which his spirit should be the nucleus, and their spirits the component members. He sought to unite them so intimately with himself that his spiritual life-currents, the very life-blood of his soul, should flow through them from him, nourishing them and building up in them the common soul of which his soul should be the nucleus, the radiant center, the source and fountain of spiritual life.

It may be suggested that these are modern thoughts and views, and should not be read into the mind of a teacher who lived two thousand years ago, and had not the advantages of these our enlightened days. But what does he himself say on this great matter of the collective corporate life? What similes and illustrations does he use? Take such a metaphor as this: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." Is not this a matchlessly eloquent simile for a collective corporate life, a shared consciousness and will, with one life current flowing through all? The Master gathering the power and life from the Father, the spiritual

world, bringing it to a centre in his heart, and thence pouring it forth through the collective life of which his soul was the nucleus, the souls of his disciples the members.

Take another illustrative metaphor which he himself used, an image striking, startling, shocking even, in the sense of shocking his hearers into aroused attention, so that their hearts might be opened to receive a stupendous truth quite foreign to all their former thought and life. This is the image: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Is it not clear that we have here another expression for the same thought: a corporate being and life, made up of the Master and his disciples, with the same life-current flowing through all as the blood flows through the body, or as the sap flows from the stem to the branches of the vine, bringing forth first the velvet buds, then the tiny golden leaflets, then the delicate-scented blossoms, and at last the clusters of grapes. A collective life, a collective consciousness and will, with the soul of the Master as its nucleus, with the life-currents flowing from his heart and soul, inspiring and quickening the whole being.

But we can test the matter thus: Does that Master use expressions which necessarily signify the operation of a collective consciousness, a consciousness which he shared with his disciples? Most decidedly, he does. What else can be the meaning of such a sentence as this: "Abide in me, and I in you"; or of words like these: "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

It is quite plain that the Master of whom we are speaking had not in view a material union, an external assembly of persons, however harmonious. He says himself: "My kingdom is not of this world"; and again: "It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing"; and once again, even more conclusively: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the

Spirit is spirit. Ye must be born again." And we may say that, in a certain sense, the necessity of making the disciples realize this was what made the Master's death inevitable; only the disappearance of his external form could bring them to realize his interior presence. That they did so is shown by our records, and notably by the testimony of two chief witnesses, Paul and James, the Master's brother, who show us the corporate spiritual life, the collective consciousness and will of which their Master was the nucleus, continued unbroken after his bodily death, and inspired and directed by him through the long years of Paul's ministry.

One point more. Does that Master lay down conditions, by compliance with which one seeking to be his disciple may enter that collective consciousness? He does, and with great precision. First, the turning toward him, just as the first disciples were asked to leave their worldly callings, to follow him. Second, complete obedience to certain rules of life which he laid down. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Third, as the fruit of this obedience, comes a sharing of the will and purpose of the Master. And, fourth, by sharing the will of the Master, we are by degrees inducted into his consciousness, so that we come to share that also, and take our place in the collective consciousness of which his life is the nucleus.

One may consider the work of that Master and his teaching either as a definite historical event, quite real and substantially as described in our records; or, on the other hand, we may view it as an ideal, a symbol of the laws and potencies of spiritual life. In either case, the practical result will be the same, since the four steps, attention, obedience, shared will, and shared consciousness, are the universal laws of spiritual life and growth, true two thousand years ago, true now, true for all time to come.

"Once bodies were offered to flames for man's uplifting. Now souls are bared that men may see the way to grow."

BOOK OF ITEMS.

FRAGMENTS

THE Path to the Masters is the path of *likeness;* there is no other way to go. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He spoke then as the Christ. Only as we conform ourselves to the Master's image can we come to know him—for by what sign or means shall we know that which is beyond the reaches of our consciousness? If he seems abstract, vague, is it not that he inhabits another world, utterly different and removed from our own? But so, mark you, only because of our limitations. For in reality he lives in the *same* world, sees the same sky and the same fields and flowers, only it is so much vaster and more luminous! As the stones and plants and animals live also in our world, each in their place and degree, but without sharing our consciousness; so we also in the Master's world see and yet not see, touch and yet never feel.

When we awake sufficiently to realize with St. Augustine that we are "afar off in a cloud of unlikeness," then we perceive the lack, the deficiency in ourselves; then we turn our faces toward him, and our hearts; then we have entered on the path; then, as we conform our minds, our acts to his, seeking to follow as he bids us follow, we learn to catch the flutter of his garment as he makes the turn before us; we see the fresh foot-prints in the path ahead, and tones of his voice are blown back to us, growing clearer as the distance lessens.

Seeking, seeking; conforming without lessening zeal—so eager is the search—we grow into that marvellous consciousness, partake of some small corner of it, and there know face to face communion with him, growing deeper, stronger, fuller day by day, as love and faith and obedience draw us closer to his heart, until at last no friend is so near as that friend, no communion so complete, no realization so vivid and so constant.

But the path is the path of *likeness,* for which we must strive with virile power. Only in unlikeness can we be afar off from a love so perfect as his.

There is a wonderful story told of the Master,—a tradition of the Egyptian Lodge, which has many traditions of him. That once he was travelling in the desert with two disciples, and received the hospitality

of some Arabs. And when the evening came, and the stars were throbbing in the sky, he sat at the door of his tent and began to sing—he, the mighty musician, the Master of harmony. And a great hush fell. The Arabs crept up to hear him, drawing closer and closer, charmed by the power of that marvellous voice. To them it seemed that Israfel had come forth from the gateways of Paradise and descended in their midst.

With the magic of that sound the night was filled, so that the stars grew more luminous with listening, and the cool breath of the desert was alive with seraphs of folded wings. And he sang and sang until the listening world could bear its beauty no more; and there came a cry, wrung from its heart; and when the cry had lifted to the stars and was lost among them, lo! the Master had gone.

Since then they have sought him throughout the desert, the marvellous singer—those Arabs and their descendants, though they never speak of it. But there, where he stopped and sang not so many years ago, echoes can still be heard of the music he left,—undying music;—and across the evening sky, when the stars come out, long troops of angels travel, keeping sacred the very air that vibrates still to the lasting melodies he gave.

CAVÉ.

SOME ASPECTS OF THEOSOPHY

As Seen by a New Member of the Society

INTRODUCTION

FULL fifty times did I try to write an introduction to this series; to explain and apologize for it; and more particularly to express my great indebtedness to the busy man who with patient self-sacrifice and surprising affection has given me of his time and rich stores of knowledge that I might learn something of Theosophy.

Forty-nine times I have failed but in the fiftieth I turned to the *Book of Common Prayer* (made truly available to me by these teachings), and in the Offertory Sentences have found just what I had tried to say and failed:

"Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity." Tobit iv. 8, 9, and, paraphrased, "All things come of Thee, O Master, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

SERVETUS.

I

THE IDEAL

To enter upon Theosophy had become my desire. But how should I? The platform of the T. S. on which I was told to stand was broad enough to take in the whole world. What definite thing must I do to set me apart? The information I had gathered from talks and books was inspiring but it was so philosophical, so universal, so simple. Christ had said it all and so had every other great Teacher of the Moral Law. "Self-control; self-sacrifice; love" seemed to embody the whole of the fundamental principles. But any good man or good woman lived up to these. The very freedom of belief afforded me made me fearful. What was the hidden secret that I felt must exist to account for such lovely characters as I found in the membership? There must surely be some formalized creed and obligation; some marking one off as of an Order.

In my search for the real qualifications all impatiently I read again the few books given to me as a beginner and asked many more questions of those patient ones who were giving me light. I felt that I simply must put myself under the unknown Rule. I dared not trust myself alone. Despite the fact that all that I had learned of Theosophy was giving reality to, and at last making something really acceptable and truly

illuminating of the Christian teachings I had received since childhood—still I wanted something more. Then after continued searching and re-searching I felt that actually I had found a real and imperative mandate. On pages 73 and 74 of *Fragments* I found:

"The first thing a Theosophist should do is *to form an ideal,* not a vague, far-away something, which he may half regretfully, half complacently believe to be impossible of attainment; but a definite, clear-cut object, varying, of course, according to the temperament and character of the man who makes it. What it is matters not, so long as it be higher and better than that which he has and is—and so long as he concentrates the full power of his nature upon its realization. As the man so working attains this ideal, he will find growing out of it another correspondingly higher, and so on indefinitely—as far as human thought can reach. In this manner a steady, consecutive growth will be ensured. He will not be one of those giant weeds that spring up in the night, only to wither when the noonday sun pours full upon it. The ideals of too many are so: born of emotion alone, nourished in a psychic hot-bed, and usually a source of gravest danger if not of ultimate destruction. Nature works slowly and surely, not by leaps, and we have been told to study nature and work with her. The cases we see of sudden unfoldment are those where growth has already taken place, and the soul, with all its stores of knowledge and experience, attained in the past, finally succeeds in commanding the personality. Those of us who believe in Masters and look to them as perfected men, have an ideal already formed to work towards; those who do not, can find innumerable types of noble and elevated thought, character and life. But the main point is that the ideal must be clearly defined, ardently desired and unfalteringly striven for. And in the fullness of time the step attained, he will see that 'wherever we stand there are always higher peaks of effort still towering beyond, lost in the mists of cloud'; as one who has traveled this path has sent us back word."

Here was comfort. Thrice welcome the deliberate and specific direction along the path!

How easy too—but, the ideal must be "definite." Very good and certainly simple—I would serve humanity; my life should be devoted to all mankind. But how? That question must be answered if one was to "consecrate the full power of his nature upon its realization." Upon consideration it became apparent that this could not be true of so huge and amorphous a subject. With a sense of vanishing pleasure I decided to limit my "ideal." To get the right result I should be content to take up work for boys. It was most enjoyable to let world-wide schemes of a great work dance past my happy mind in a succession of gorgeous colors. I soon began to plume myself upon already being the great benefactor of the coming generations. This ideal certainly went "as far as human thought can reach." Then, suddenly, I recalled

that this phrase of praise did not apply to me. It described a later stage and that a growth, not a newborn fancy. Painful though the process, it was certain that I must again draw in my ideal. "The boys of America" was as broad a field as I could venture to undertake. But the internal dissatisfaction was not lulled. Upon re-reading again the instructions, the statement "Nature works slowly and surely, not by leaps" stuck out. It also told me to be natural above all things. So great a project might be a characteristic concept but I had to confess it would not be natural.

The shrinkage of my ideal was resumed—perhaps I would better begin by devoting myself to the boys of New York. This vision was enticing and great were the institutions I imagined and great the power for good that I felt I would prove.

It was a little difficult to know where to begin. Especially, as I can now see, that I merely read and did not accept the solemn admonition: "But the main point is that the ideal must be clearly defined, ardently desired and unfalteringly striven for." I was too busy just then with my vision to bother with such realities! Friends of mine were interested in some church work in the city. One consecrated man was in charge. I sensed his consecration but dismissed the thought for I felt that in comparison with me he lacked practicality. So, when opportunity same, I tried to steer him on the proper course by patronizing advice. I can now see that it was only the combination of the Christ-qualities of gentleness and humor that kept him from slaying my conceit (if not me!) on the spot. I suspect he knew what would come. He listened patiently and, pending the adoption of my more ambitious plans, suggested that I try a class of boys. I felt it a waste of time for one with such a great work to do as I had, to undertake so elemental a task, but he craftily suggested that it would give me a chance to obtain local knowledge of his particular problem, and, thinking that this would enable me to advise him the better, I undertook to give twelve lessons in a certain practical science to twelve older boys.

The one thing I do not understand is why the resultant disintegration of the class could not have maintained a more perfect "curve," as the engineers say, for if only one boy had stayed until the last session I would have lost exactly one boy, on the average, for each lesson, but the last two regulars failed to show up for the eleventh lesson and the twelfth meeting is yet to be held!

I had been so busy with my vision of a great ideal, so conceited in my confidence in my own ability to do anything unaided and without thought of the motive, that I had done no work of preparation, and my boys had found me out. Having nothing to give them they refused to waste their time, even if I were willing to waste mine. It came over me, as I sat alone at the eleventh session, waiting for the two regulars who never came, that perhaps my "ideal" of service was not even one of those "innumerable types of noble and elevated thought, character

and life," given as an alternative standard. It had been ignoble to undertake the work in a spirit of patronage, coupled with the feeling that I was wasting my talents. It had not been elevating for the boys for their teacher to run in gaily from his club, not knowing what he was to talk about or else bringing some conscripted friend of scientific attainments to talk over the young men's heads. I had not given much "thought" to the subject, certainly not "character" and I had never really considered giving them anything, to say nothing of my "life"!

My palaces of delight had crumbled one after another and had kept on a-crumbling until now my last cherished ideal was a chaotic ruin. Worse yet, my consideration had now been turned to my own limitations and I did not dare even to desire a smaller class of smaller boys to work with and to work for. Had I no ideal?

Then began my first real thinking as a student of Theosophy, and its outcome was that I realized that I had made myself in various forms my own ideal. I had been vain. Worse yet, I had been stupid. I had not recognized that I had only decked myself in gay costumes for my own empty amusement. I was mortified. I was discouraged. Yet somehow I could not give up the search for an ideal. I wanted, I craved the view of those "always higher peaks of effort still towering beyond, lost in the mist of clouds." Was that great vision never to be mine?

"Then out of the darkness came a light; out of the stillness a voice." If under the very first test I had failed to qualify in Theosophy there was still something left to me. I could, at least, try to live up to the teachings I had received. As I reviewed these they focussed into the decision that I should attempt to help someone else and I seemed, somehow, to know and to know with surety that that "someone" was an older member of my own family who had never had all the happiness her beautiful life had merited. I would give up dreams of Theosophical attainment and quietly seek to give her such happiness as lay in my power.

Then it came to me that in that thought I had an ideal. Yet the ideal was merely to do my nearest, surest, simplest duty. Apparently to enter upon Theosophy the first step was to forget self; to be simple; "and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me."

I had taken my step toward Theosophy.

II

RELATIONS WITH LIFE

At last I dared to consider that I had entered upon Theosophy. There were few newer, none cruder, but I, too, was a member on the roll of the T. S.

I had entered a new Service, joined a new Command. How would

this affect my relations with life? Of all my readings so far, that of Oriental trend had made the first appeal. How satisfactory it would be to give up all—work, caste, family and ambition, and just enjoy the marvelous philosophy slowly unfolding before me. How lucky the men of the East who could turn from things mundane to the World of Mind and, passing through that, enter into the World of the Soul. How I did envy Purim Dass the privilege to become Purim Bhagat and to give up the Star of India for a begger's bowl.

But Gradgrindian facts barred the way. To say nothing of climatic limitations and the American inability to differentiate between a wandering holy man and a commonplace "hobo," I had responsibilities not easy to put aside. Then a kind (and ever since beloved) friend had the courage among other things to tell me that such dreamings were "but the subtlest forms of self-indulgence." A cold water douche when one has been drugged is never pleasant but it does wake one up and later is appreciated with gratitude. So I set aside the drugging temptation of contemplating such unwisdom. Were such a life to be for me the opportunity would have been given me.

But the effect of the drug lingered and the illusion took the form of considering the possibility of becoming an anchorite with all the latest Twentieth Century improvements. I would go through life and work an untroubled automaton, as really removed from contact with or response to the life about me as if I were in the Desert or in the recesses of those mountains I miss but know not. Neither business duties nor kith nor kin should hamper my Soul's development.

Fortunately before I crystalized in this absurdity I began to sense that to learn aught of Theosophy one must turn back to Christ, our great Master, and, while I was almost lamenting aloud my sad lot as a business man in a great city with family duties, there came the recollection of the attempt to trap our Lord by asking him about the tribute to Cæsar. I looked up His answer (Matthew xxii, 17) and read: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" This seemed to be a special message for my need. The more I sought the meaning of this teaching the clearer it became. The Master had unfailingly accepted His own lot, recognized His own limits of circumstance, respected the Law and His own status and had never sought to better or change the situation for more seemingly favorable surroundings for His accomplishment. If He did all this and did not even refuse the bitter cup how dared I not accept my easy limitations!

"Limitations" did I call them! It came over me that they were blessed opportunities. I saw that with even a little of Theosophy I should have been a better lover and husband, and that I yet could be a better son, brother, father, employé and citizen. I knew then that I was put here this time to work for my own ultimate development and how

unalterably foolish to cast aside the tools placed ready at my hand to sigh for those not deemed as helpful for my task.

The "Universal Brotherhood" doctrine now first appeared as sane and practicable. I was to "love my neighbor as myself," but I must also accept my own lot and station. Since I was a son, a brother, a father, it would not be acceptance of my lot to care less than I did care for those dear ones allotted to me. The doctrine simply meant that I must not harm others but should consider and care for them as well as for my family and not seek to separate myself from any other through hate. It came as an inspiration that the Universal Brotherhood of course included my own family and that to neglect them would be to break the tenets of the doctrine!

Before joining the T. S. I had heard that occultism invariably destroyed family ties and remitted family duties. Now that I had joined the T. S. I rejoiced to find this popular fallacy utterly and inexcusably wrong and that I was to be enabled to love the more and to do the more for those belonging to me. How clearly compatible this was with the acceptance of the Universal Brotherhood. It is the law of life that each shall serve and fend for his own. If I failed in this loving task what right had I to expect some Brother to give up his allotted work in order to do mine? It all came down to a question of motives—what worse selfishness, and of the most forbidden kind, to hurt another for the sake of trying to develop one's Soul?—one's parents, brothers, sisters, children are of the Brothers—why be heretically separate against them alone!

Then I found that theosophical thinking, studying, listening, were helping me surprisingly in my business relations and efficiency. The killing of the snake of self and the acceptance of others as my brothers has proved a hard, hard task from the beginning. But from the beginning I have found that the effort to do my duty has helped me to think straighter, work harder, and get on better with others.

After the beneficial reaction upon my business situation had become noticeable to me I became frightened, fearing lest I was losing ground spiritually, and I turned in panic to my friend and patient teacher for relief and advice. "Of course you will be helped in all ways so long as you seek only the Path, but beware lest you seek the help for sordid or selfish motives. Not only will you not get what you try for, but you will lose more than it and suffer much until you learn the lesson."

Then from his associate came the word that "the Master's work is here" and that so long as I worked solely for and only by the Master and was ever, ever on guard as to the righteousness of motive; ceaselessly watching that my motive was not selfish or self-advancement in any form; that most certainly the growing power I would gain would help me in every way, even in the market place, if that were to be for my good.

So, in my earliest stage as a member of the T. S. I learned that I would be helped in every way in each and all of my relations with life just so long as (and no longer than) I was in truth a seeker after Theosophy, and not merely masquerading as one.

III

"WHEN IS MOTHER COMING BACK?"

"There is no problem of life and its relations which a Theosophical attitude will not solve." Once this would have sounded ridiculous—as either an exaggeration or as fanaticism. Yet that it is neither, the veriest tyro soon finds. Take our attitude toward the death of a loved one. What shall it be? Is there a greater problem, even to those reared most carefully in the ordinary Christian family? Yet that may be answered by the student of Theosophy; the follower of Christ's real teachings. This at least is the conviction that comes to one as the result of the earliest advance that a student is enabled to make. When so many worthy people, even older priests, are silenced how dare any one speak? Because a little child can lead him.

The smoothest lying, the most ingenious fictions had failed to satisfy the little boy when his mother had died. For a time he had fretted; for two months he had questioned; and for a month he had been silent. "Comforted at last," said the wiseacres. But the little body had been growing frailer and the little nerves more sensitive—painfully so. But the child had "accepted the inevitable." Had he? In the stillness of the night he suddenly waked his father with unusual and hysterical sobbing. The little voice wailed in the darkness, "When is Mother coming back? When is Mother coming back?" What was the father to do? Relatives had advised to deceive the child with statements that his mother had gone away "to get well," the earlier stage of the lying, and the later was to be indefinite and to lead the child's mind off the subject and in time his recollection would be dimmed and finally he would be comforted (calloused?). This policy had evidently failed. The little boy, not yet five years old, had felt the falsehood. Until that instant the father had not accepted the doctrine of reincarnation, but in that moment of trial, in the mystery of the night, fearful lest his child should suffer into sickness, his own mind was clarified. Two recollections came to him and though different yet they were one. The first was the Order for the Burial of the Dead, last read from the *Book of Common Prayer,* over the body of the boy's mother. The second was of the answers from time to time of his friend and teacher to his questions; questions not consecutive or always pertinent yet now the scattered answers came as one, and that one the same that St. Paul gave the Corinthians in his pæan of the victory over Death.

So, the father told his little boy the truth; that his mother was not coming back but that the boy could some day go to her. From Oriental phraseology he caught the thought of the distinction between the "I" (the really truly little boy) and "his" body, "his" mind. The discarding of the body terrestrial for the body celestial was explained in simple terms, mostly Biblical, and it was explained that this often happened and would happen to the boy and his father. The interminability of the current church teaching of a single incarnation was avoided by the explanation of reincarnation. That God had called his mother to let her rest between bodies was plain to the child and comforting, especially after he had been reminded of how he took off his clothes before he went to sleep and put on fresh, clean clothes in the morning before he started to play. It had been thought that he had been guarded from knowledge of death, yet it came out in the confidences of the dark that he had seen a little dog which had been killed, was "dead" and that he had caught a whisper or had guessed that his mother was stiff and cold. That was the horror that had been eating into his little life. When he found that it was only his mother's body that had died his fear vanished.

At first he wanted to go to his mother at once and repeatedly since he has wished for "a new body" when hurt or not well, but the fear of death has departed. What reconciled him to waiting was not avoidance or forgetfulness but the analogy that his father and other men worked and that he wanted to grow up and do his work before he could "go to God," or "go to sleep and rest with mother," his two descriptions of Devachan or Paradise. This satisfied him, since he had been trained to put his toys away and do his other "work" before he could go to sleep, however much he had wanted to when tired. He prays for his mother and prattles of her. To him death is but a sleep, something that often happens and is not to be feared.

The little boy is now more robust than ever before. He is less nervous. He really tries to get to sleep sooner; to keep up his day time naps, which his playmates of his own age have abandoned, and to eat what is given him so that "my body shall grow big and strong" for the work "I am going to do before I can go to Mother." Attempts to move him by reciting "his" needs and "his" appetite had failed but the spirit of fair play toward the needs and appetite of "his" body seemed to appeal to him. Relatives had feared a morbid turn of mind from such disclosures but the happiness of the conviction that his dear mother still lives, that God needs her for other work in her next body and is letting her rest now and the assurance that some day they will be together have made the little fellow happier and stronger. But the outraged feelings of worthy people who call themselves Christians and yet regard Death as defeat rather than victory, as Terror rather than Peace, have reacted on the child until he rarely and then only with reserve will say anything of his creed and convictions. He still has the abiding comfort of his own

knowledge that all is well and that "mothers don't die, only their bodies" —the simple remark that shocked one of the worthiest of his mother's friends into open denunciations that puzzled and silenced the child.

If the desire to fit his body for work and to get his work done so that he can get to his mother and the feeling that death is a commonplace helped a little child, why not a man?

"Thou turnest man to destruction: again thou sayest, come again, ye children of men." Thus the Burial Service reads; thus the student of Theosophy early learns to believe.

IV

THE REACTION FROM ONE ASPECT

One evening a connection who had just heard that I had joined the T. S. sent for me. I could not see why but after noticeable hesitancy and indirection the evening ended in the following dialogue:

"You are a Churchman?"

"I try to be; I was so baptised, educated and confirmed; and I so believe."

"You are doing some work in connection with one of the Parishes in town?"

"I have that privilege and pleasure."

"How then can you call yourself a Theosophist?"

"I don't. I hope to be one. I am, however, now only a new member of the Theosophical Society and a student of primary Theosophy."

"Well, I don't see how you can possibly call yourself a Christian and be that!"

Yet that able, charming, sincere and devout young woman has been for years active in the church and an almost daily reader of those two great Theosophical respositories, the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer.*

But I can appreciate from my own experience how shocked she would have been had I ventured to tell her that my very first studies in Theosophy had revived my moribund Christian faith, had shown me the verity of Christ's teachings; had convinced me of the sincerity of His repeated promises to continue His work for His children, and so led me to believe that He is even this day at work in our behalf.

The physical jar, the brutal physical shock I suffered when I first heard Christ calmly accepted as a present-day Actuality with Individuality is still too fresh and painful a recollection for me ever, I hope, to be impatient with members of Christian bodies who recite Theosophical teachings and truths and know it not. Yet shocked though I was, I believed as I listened, racked and torn (and this, most emphatically, was not the same or in any way similar to the familiar evangelical conversion) and this acceptance on my part was one of the very first fruits of my preliminary studies in Theosophy. SERVETUS.

THE DOGMA OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

"A certain woman lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee. . . .

"But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

THE trial of an American clergyman for views held heretical concerning the Virgin Birth of Jesus is in all our memories. And it seems that this is the type of question which will serve as a rallying cry for all those who uphold the letter of the law; that the acceptance of such doctrines as the Virgin Birth will be a test of Orthodoxy for some time to come.

As a student of religion, especially in that vast Orient whence so much of religion has come, I am persuaded that the position of the prosecutors in the trial to which I have alluded rested on a misunderstanding, a materialization of a spiritual truth; that they have misapprehended the nature and meaning of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, and, therefore, that the clergyman whom they condemned was the victim of a judicial error, based, shall we say, on a wrong construction of the statute.

I think the truth is, that the dogma of the Virgin Birth, far from being in any sense peculiar to Christian theology, is of universal extent and of vast antiquity. It is more than a supernatural event in the life of Jesus. It is really an integral part of a much wider doctrine, a doctrine fundamental to all religion: the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Divine Man.

The universality of this teaching is suggested by Rev. R. J. Campbell, when he writes: "the idea of a divine Man, the emanation of the infinite, the soul of the universe, the source and goal of all humanity, is ages older than Christian theology. It can be traced in Babylonian religious literature, for instance, at a period older even than the Old Testament. . . . This aspect of the nature of God has been variously described in the course of its history. It has been called the Word (Logos), the Son, and, as we have seen, the second person of the Trinity. For various reasons I prefer to call it—or rather Him—the eternal Christ."

It has long seemed certain to me that there is a connection between Babylonian religious literature and the hymns of the Rig Veda. Be this as it may, we find the doctrine of the divine Man very eloquently set forth in the Vedic hymns. Thus the *Purusha Sukta* declares:

". . . Such is his greatness; the divine Man is yet greater—
"The universe of creatures is one part of his being,
"Three parts are immortal in the heavens.

"From him was born the Word. From the Word was born Spiritual Man.
"When the Powers, making the divine Man the offering, accomplished the sacrifice,
"Spring was the oil, Summer was the fuel, Autumn was the oblation.

"From this sacrifice, where he who is the world became the offering, all things were born. . . .
"The Powers, accomplishing the sacrifice, bound the divine Man as sacrificial victim.
"These were the first religious rites. . . ."

The thought is, that the Logos, through self-sacrifice, became manifest as the created universe, in every particle of which the Logos lives and moves. This Incarnation of the divine Man in the world must be distinguished from the pantheism which sees Deity immersed and absorbed in the universe. For "the universe of creatures is one part of his being; three parts are immortal in the heavens." These three parts are the three divine Persons: Creator, Preserver, Regenerator, in the One Eternal.

The Death and Resurrection of Osiris

The Incarnation of the divine Man through sacrifice was the religion of ancient Egypt. The central figure of the teaching was Osiris, in the ages before the dynastic kings. Osiris, or Hesiri, was the son of the goddess Nut; and a double paternity, human and divine, was attributed to him. At his birth, a divine voice rang out, proclaiming that "the Lord of all has come into the world."

During the eight and twenty years of his life, Osiris brought civilization and culture to Egypt, teaching the people the use of corn and the vine, which thus came to be associated with his worship. He left Egypt to carry his message to other lands, and we find independent traces of his teaching in the oldest records of the Euphrates valley. On his return to Egypt, he was ensnared by Set, "the serpent," slain, and enclosed in a coffin, which was set adrift on the Nile. After long search, his body was found by Isis, or Hes, his sister-wife. Isis opened the coffin, and laid her face on the face of Osiris, kissing him and shedding tears.

Set again seized the body of Osiris, and cutting it into twice seven fragments, cast it into the Nile. Isis found the fragments, bound them together with bandages, and fanned the cold form with her wings.

Osiris was restored to life, and reigned as king of the dead, and judge of souls.

The Egyptians saw in the resurrection of Osiris the evidence of life beyond the grave: "as surely as Osiris lives, shall we live also." Osiris is at once the type of the divine Man incarnated primordially in the world, his body being cut up by the serpent of Matter, and scattered through the world; and also the divine Man definitely incarnated in Egypt for the good of mankind, offering his body as a sacrifice, and rising from the dead. He is an Avatar, a divine Incarnation, not only in the cosmic, but also in the human sense. And we find that every spiritual manifestation of religion rests on the same thought of a definite divine Incarnation in human form; the history of every religion is that of a slow decline from the pristine teaching of the incarnate divine Man.

The bas-reliefs of Dendera show Osiris lying swathed on the bier, then gradually raising himself till he stands upright. An ancient inscription declares that: "He gave his body to feed the people; he died that they might live." We are told that Apis, the symbol of the life of Osiris, was born through a divine conception, the impregnation of a divine power. Apis was, therefore, in the symbolical sense, a Virgin Birth.

The Incarnation of Krishna

The *Purusha Sukta* depicted the divine Man putting forth the power called the Word, and then causing himself to be born through the Word as spiritual Man. In other words, the Logos, through his own divine power, becomes manifest as the soul. This is the heart of the religion of ancient India.

In the long centuries before the birth of Buddha, when the Three Persons of the Trinity had come to be called Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva —Creator, Preserver, Regenerator—the divine Man, who was considered as related in a special way to the Second Person of the Trinity, was called "the Lord." The Lord manifested himself through the power of Maya, the feminine Word. This was his Virgin Birth. The Lord causes Maya to bring him forth, and is himself the child who is brought forth. Thus Maya comes to be symbolised as the Mother of the Lord.

As in Egypt, we have also the particular incarnation of the Logos in human form, the incarnation in India being Krishna, son of Devaki. Krishna is now recognised as a historical person, born several centuries before the Buddha, who was born six centuries before Christ. The incarnation of Krishna was twofold. First, there was the Virgin Birth of the Logos, the Lord, through Maya personified as a goddess. Then there was the human birth of the same Lord, as Krishna, son of Devaki, the wife of Vasudeva. This was a normal human birth, yet it was attended with signs and wonders, which are eloquently described by the *Vishnu Purana:* "on the day of his birth, the heavens were irradiated with joy. The winds were hushed. The seas made murmurous music,

as the spirits of heaven sang." The voice of an angel sounded in the father's ears, warning him that the child must be taken away, to escape the wrath of the tyrant Kansa, who sought to slay him. The tyrant, enraged at the child's escape, ordered a slaughter of all new-born children, of two years old and under. Krishna escaped this slaughter, and lived to become a great teacher, later revered as the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.

The Birth of the Buddha

Several centuries later, and some six hundred years before the birth of Jesus, was born Siddhartha the Compassionate, also esteemed a divine Incarnation. The Buddhist scriptures, Sanskrit and Pali, tell the story with great beauty. I shall try to summarise their narrative.

The Lord, who was to be born as the Buddha, "the Awakened," is depicted as dwelling in heaven, and perceiving that the time had come for him to be born among men, for the salvation of the world, he chose the family of king Suddhodana, in the ancient city of the sage Kapila. "The mother of a Buddha is one who has kept the precepts unbroken from the day of her birth. Now this queen Maya is such a one; and she shall be my mother." Maya the queen falls asleep and in a dream is caught up into Paradise. There she beholds the future Buddha miraculously entering her womb. She awakes and tells her dream. The wise men declare that she has divinely conceived, and that a son will be born to her "who will roll back the clouds of sin and folly from the world." At the moment of her conception, a great light spread through all the world, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke, flowers bloomed everywhere, heavenly music was heard in the sky, and the fires of hell were quenched.

Angels guarded queen Maya with drawn swords, until her time was fulfilled. Then she desired to return to her father's home. Between the two cities was a grove of sal trees, and at this time the grove was a mass of flowers, with birds singing among the branches. When queen Maya, passing on her way to her father's house, beheld it, she desired to enter the grove to gather flowers. Going to the foot of a mighty sal tree, she stretched out her hands toward a branch. The branch bent down to her hand, and formed a canopy of leaves round her. Then the birth-pains came upon her. Four angels received the future Buddha as he was born, and bathed him with streams of miraculous water. Then placing him before his mother, the angels said: "Rejoice, O queen, a mighty son has been born to you!" The future Buddha strode forward seven paces, and said, with a noble voice: "The chief am I in all the world!" The aged saint Kaladevala came to see the new-born babe, and rejoiced over him, lamenting also that he would not live to see his full glory.

There is also a noteworthy passage: "A womb that has been

occupied by a future Buddha is like the shrine of a temple, and can never be used again. Therefore the mother of the future Buddha died when he was seven days old, and was reborn in heaven."

Here the two elements of the Incarnation are blended together. The divine Maya becomes queen Maya, and the divine birth is blended with the human birth. Yet we have the conception in Paradise, as well as the birth on earth.

Herodotus notes that the Greek story of Dionysus almost exactly repeats the Egyptian teaching of Osiris. In the same way Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to India, identifies an Indian hero, who seems to be Krishna, first with Dionysus and then with Hercules. Hercules in his turn finds his prototype in ancient Babylon. We thus see that all these divine Incarnations, "goddess-born," who "bruise the head of the serpent," are but different presentations of a single idea.

In western Asia, which was influenced both by Babylon and Egypt, we find several versions of the same primeval teaching, often materialised and overladen with sensuous details, yet recognisably the same in origin. In Syria, the doctrine of the divine Man attached itself to Adonis, whence the rites of Adonis reached Greece. In Phrygia the corresponding divine personage is the hero Attis, and circumstances decided that the worship of Attis should have a marked influence on the religious ideas of Rome.

The Death and Resurrection of Attis

Dr. J. G. Frazer has learnedly set forth the history of Attis, in his recently published book: *Adonis, Attis, Osiris.* He shows that Attis was said to have been a fair young shepherd, beloved of the mother of the gods. His birth was miraculous. His mother Nana was a virgin, who conceived through the power of a sacred tree. The priests of Attis "made themselves eunuchs" in honor of their divinity.

The worship of Attis was brought to Rome at the time of the great struggle with Carthage, two centuries before Christ. At the vernal equinox a pine-tree, cut in the woods, was brought to the sanctuary, and decked with violets. The effigy of Attis was tied to its stem.

On the next day, the "Day of Blood," the effigy of Attis was buried. Late in the evening, "the tomb was opened; the god had risen from the dead; and, as the priest touched the lips of the mourners with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation." The next day, March 25, was a public festival in honor of the resurrection.

The sanctuary of Attis and his divine mother was on the Vatican hill, and St. Jerome tells us that the traditional birthplace of Jesus was a cave shaded by a grove sacred to Adonis. It is further noteworthy that in Phrygia and Gaul, and even for a time in Rome, Easter was celebrated on March 25, being thus a fixed solar feast, instead of a movable lunar feast, as Easter now is, in conformity with the Jewish

Feast of the Passover. There is also an intimate connection between the celebration of December 25 and the Mithraic festival of the birth of the sun-god.

The Nativity of Jesus

This brings us to the nativity of Jesus, and the Virgin Birth as a Christian dogma. Let us first consider the negative side of the question.

To begin with, Jesus himself, though clearly affirming his divine incarnation and divine parentage, makes no mention of a miraculous human birth. On the contrary, when the woman cried out: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee!" we find Jesus replying: "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." In exactly the same way he says: "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." It cannot, therefore, be said that Jesus lays stress on the Virgin Birth, as a necessary article of belief, nor indeed does he ever suggest such a doctrine.

In like manner neither John nor Paul nor Peter have anything to say of the Virgin Birth, either as an article of faith or even as a tradition, though Paul had an admirable opportunity to do so, for example, when he wrote to the Galatians: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." It is noteworthy that Paul does not write: "made of a virgin," and we know that this epistle is an autograph. Peter also speaks of birth through "incorruptible seed," through the Word of the living God, but refers to the regenerate in general, and not in any special way to the physical birth of Jesus. And John, though writing of "the Word made flesh," says nothing of Virgin Birth in the material sense. The same is true of James, "the Lord's brother," and of Jude "the brother of James."

The only references in the New Testament to the Virgin Birth, as a material fact in the history of Jesus, are in the passages, Matthew I, 18-25, and Luke I, 26-38. The verses in Matthew immediately follow the genealogy of Joseph, whose father is said to have been Jacob, and who was descended from King David through Solomon. We are told that: "the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. . . . Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."

The reference is to Isaiah VII, 14. Literally, the Hebrew reads: "Behold, the young woman shall conceive, and shall bear a son." On this passage Prof. Toy writes: "The rendering 'virgin' is inadmissable. The Hebrew has a separate word for 'virgin.'" He further points out that a definite historical event, in the eighth century before Christ, is

referred to, and that there is no allusion in it to a future time of prosperity for Judah.

In Luke, the essential part of the story is contained in verses 34-35 of the first chapter: "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Only in the third chapter of Luke do we find the genealogy of Joseph. But here the father of Joseph is called Heli, and his descent is derived from David not through Solomon but through Nathan. The occurrence of the genealogy as late as the third chapter of Luke suggests that this gospel originally began with that chapter, thus starting at the mission of John the Baptist, as the second and fourth gospels do. Similarly, the verses 18-25 of the first chapter of Matthew might be omitted without in the least breaking the continuity of the narrative. This is exactly what we should find, if the passage were a later insertion.

The Brothers of the Lord

It would seem, therefore, that, with the exception of these two short passages, which bear some evidence of being later additions, we find no allusion to the Virgin Birth, as a material fact in the life of Jesus, in the canon of the New Testament. The real home of that doctrine is in the apocryphal gospels.

There we find the doctrine set forth at great length, and with a multitude of details, to some of which we shall presently recur. It is very significant that, at the same time, we find the appearance of a cognate doctrine, that of the "perpetual virginity" of Mary, which presently becomes of primary importance. As the emergence of this latter doctrine sheds much light on the later insistence on the material Virgin Birth, we may briefly examine it here.

What have the canonical books of the New Testament to say as to Mary's "perpetual virginity"? Bearing on this question, we have such passages as this, in Matthew: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" The parallel passage in Mark reads: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" Luke also speaks of "the mother and brethren" of Jesus, though without citing the latter by name. John has a noteworthy passage, in which the brethren of Jesus rather ironically urge him to go up to Jerusalem, and show his works publicly. In the Acts, we have the mention of Mary the mother of Jesus and his brethren. And finally we have Paul speaking of James "the Lord's brother," and also of "the brethren of the Lord." I am inclined to think that the

mother of Jesus is referred to by Luke, as "Mary the mother of James," who was a witness of the crucifixion, and who is called "Mary the mother of James and Joses" by Matthew. At least it is certain that these passages were taken to refer to the mother of Jesus by writers of the apocryphal gospels who explain them away by telling how Mary had adopted James.

But leaving out these last references, we have nearly a dozen passages in the New Testament (in the four gospels, in the Acts, and in Paul's Epistles) referring to "the brethren of Jesus," and always in connection with Mary. The plain meaning of these passages is, that James and Joses, Jude and Simon were the children of Joseph and Mary, Jesus being the "first-born" son, their elder brother. It is noteworthy that Matthew and Luke both speak of Jesus as the "first-born" son of Mary, at least suggesting that there were later children. Dr. Alford, who examines these passages very fully, comes to the conclusion that the brethren of the Lord were the children of Mary the mother of Jesus, and of Joseph.

The Virgin Birth in the Apocryphal Gospels

When we come to the apocryphal gospels, we find the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus occupying a very important place. A whole cycle of narrative confronts us, in which every side of the doctrine is given ample scope. The question of "the brethren of the Lord" is covered by declaring that Joseph was a widower with four sons, James, Joses, Jude and Simon, and two daughters, Assia and Lydia, when he was espoused to Mary. The book called the "Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew" makes Joseph say: "I am an old man, and have children; why do you hand over to me this infant (Mary), who is younger than my grandsons?"

The book called "The History of Joseph the Carpenter" goes even further, and makes Jesus himself narrate the circumstances of his miraculous birth: "Joseph, that righteous man, my father after the flesh, and the spouse of my mother Mary, went away with his sons to his trade, practising the art of a carpenter. And I chose her (Mary) of my own will, with the concurrence of my Father, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit. And I was made flesh of her, by a mystery which transcends the grasp of created reason." This choice of Mary by the future Savior strongly reminds us of the choice of Maya by the future Buddha.

When we come to the conception of Jesus, the apocryphal gospels offer us a richly colored narrative. The dogma of the Virgin Birth is safeguarded by the declaration that, immediately after the formal betrothal in the temple, Joseph departed to the seaside, leaving Mary in his house. Then we have the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, in passages resembling the narrative in Luke, but very much more elaborate. Then, six months after the conception, Joseph returns, and witnesses,

human and divine, appear to testify to the virginity of Mary. Joseph and Mary later go up to Jerusalem, and on the way the babe is born, in a cave to which Mary had retired. The cave is filled with miraculous light. The voices of angels are heard. And the babe is born without pain. Several of these ancient books tell us, further, that the virginity of Mary, even after the birth of Jesus, was established by a midwife, or, in some narratives, two midwives, who had been brought by Joseph. All these works at the same time insist on the "perpetual virginity" of Mary, and affirm that "the brethren of Jesus" were children of Joseph by a former wife.

We may complete this part of the story by saying that the Virgin Birth of Jesus, in the material sense, is taught in the *Koran,* which tells us that Gabriel appeared to Mary, announcing the birth of her son; that he breathed on her, and at that moment she conceived. This breath of the angel is evidently the distorted form of the teaching of conception through "the holy Spirit," which in Greek would be "the holy Breath."

Mirkhond, the Persian historian of the fifteenth century, tells us that Mary brought forth her son while leaning against a palm-tree, and that angels attended her, and produced a shower of miraculous water to wash the babe. These details, like the choice of Mary by the future Savior, and the doctrine of the "perpetual virginity," strongly suggest that the story of the Nativity was influenced by Buddhism in the early centuries, during which the apocryphal gospels were crystalising out of popular legend. I am inclined to think that these works reacted on the canonical gospels, and that from them the narratives of the Virgin Birth overflowed into Matthew and Luke.

Conclusion

We are justified, therefore, in saying that Jesus himself has nothing to say of the Virgin Birth, as an abnormal event in his own life. On the contrary, he brushes aside an attempt to glorify the physical circumstances of his birth.

John and Paul, Peter and Mark, James and Jude are equally silent as to the material Virgin Birth of Jesus, though many occasions for referring to this presented themselves.

On the other hand, Jesus himself, and also John and Paul, Peter and James, have very much to say of the real Virgin Birth, in the spiritual sense, the "birth from above" through the Holy Spirit, the birth of "the new man, the Lord from heaven." Peter speaks of all the regenerate as thus "begotten of God, of incorruptible seed;" and James speaks of "the Father of Lights," who "of his own will begat us with the Word of truth." In this spiritual rebirth, the Virgin Birth from above, Jesus is, as Paul says, "the first-born among many brethren."

When we come to the apocryphal gospels, we find this idea of the spiritual Virgin Birth materialised into an abnormal physiological event,

which is described with abundance of realistic detail, and elaborately developed. We find it in intimate association with two other doctrines, that of the Virgin Birth of Mary, and that of Mary's "perpetual virginity." It is evident that this ascetic view of the events of life dates from the period of the hermits and celibates, during which the celibacy of the clergy was also formulated, though we know from the New Testament that Peter and the other apostles, as well as "the brethren of the Lord" were married, and Paul especially recommends the choice of married men as bishops. There is every likelihood that the material doctrine of the Virgin Birth flowed back from the apocryphal gospels into the early chapters of Matthew and Luke, which are not closely attached to the rest of the New Testament.

This is the conclusion as to the purely Christian side of the dogma. But it is in no sense a peculiarly Christian doctrine. On the contrary, it is already in existence in the oldest records of mankind. We find it as a twofold doctrine, cosmic and particular. As a cosmic doctrine, it gives an account of the formation of the world, by the manifestation of the Logos, the divine Man "immortal in the heavens." As a particular doctrine, we find it applied to divine Incarnations, who are held to be manifestations of the Logos in human form, for the salvation of mankind. These incarnations are always associated with the idea of the Virgin Birth, a "birth without sin."

When Jesus came to be recognized as a divine Incarnation, it was both natural and right that all the characteristics of such Incarnation should be applied to him; that he should be endowed with all the insignia of royalty, including the Virgin Birth, as a spiritual teaching. This was as natural and right as that John should apply to him Philo's doctrine of the Logos, which was but the restatement of the oldest spiritual teaching in the world. It was equally natural that pious but unlearned devotees should materialise this teaching, and turn it into an abnormal physiological event, as we find in the apocryphal gospels.

If these conclusions are just, then we are in no sense called on to accept the Virgin Birth of Jesus as a physiological fact; but on the other hand, the Virgin Birth of Jesus, as of all the regenerate, in the true spiritual sense, is not only true, but is an integral part of religion.

CHARLES JOHNSTON.

DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

THE typical missionary of a decade or two ago has been used as an illustration by many a lecturer from the platform of the Theosophical Society. The splendid symbolism of the great Eastern Scriptures, to which the Society has been given the key, was to these narrow enthusiasts but unintelligible hieroglyphs, or the most literal anthropomorphism. They could see only the heathen in his blindness bowing down to wood and stone.

The thought of the world has changed in intervening years and the depth and profoundity of Eastern mysticism is being recognized throughout the Western thinking world. But the light which we can now see behind the stranger imagery of other times and races is still obscured for many of us by forms different but yet much closer to our own; and many protestant Christians of to-day turn from the early Catholic writers with the same contemptuous, ignorant condemnation of idolatry that our missionaries used to reveal in their description of Buddhist or Brahman literature. Sometimes great differences are more easily overcome than little.

It is, I think, for this reason that the great mystical literature which Christianity has produced is to-day so little known and studied. The forms and symbols in which it is couched have been misunderstood and misinterpreted too recently by those about us for it to be wholly easy for us to read them now aright. Yet within them is the age-old truth of the way of life and the pathway of the soul. No one can understand Christianity who is content to pass these records by with careless indifference. No one can really understand Theosophy, or its universality in all religions, who ignores them or is balked by their symbolism.

It is for these reasons, and because they are so little known, and far from being generally accessible in the ordinary book-store or library, that it seems it would serve a useful purpose to give a list of some of the greatest of them; some of the first hand records, each independent, each original, which describe with such astonishing unanimity the journey of the soul and the laws of the spiritual life.

The number of mystical devotional books of really good quality is limited; so limited that even within the space of a single article it is possible to give a fairly comprehensive list, with some description of those least known, and where and how to get them.

First, there are the well known purely Theosophical devotional books which may be obtained from the Secretary of the T. S., 159 Warren Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.: *Light on the Path; Voice of the Silence;*

Through the Gates of Gold; Fragments; several translations of the *Bhagavad Gita; Letters that Have Helped Me,* Vol. I and Vol. II. These do not require any comment. We recommend beginning with *Fragments* and *Light on the Path.* Then there are the *Upanishads* and the Bible which of course must be included in our library. The best translations of some of the *Upanishads* are by Mr. Charles Johnston, but unfortunately they are scattered through many publications, some of which are unobtainable. *The Song of Life* and *From the Upanishads* contain the bulk of his work, however, and he is now preparing a volume which will collect the balance and will contain some new translations. His aim is to make available for English readers the seven or eight great *Upanishads,*—those dealing with the essence of the mystery doctrine. There are many others, some thirty-nine in all. Max Müller tried to translate them in his *Sacred Books of the East,* but as he did not understand what they were about, his work is practically useless. Professor Deussen of Germany has published a complete translation which is the best in any modern language, but this has not yet been put into English.

There are, of course, many commentaries on the Upanishads, some of which have been translated, and there are the *Yoga Aphorisms,* of Patanjali, which have just appeared in The QUARTERLY, and which are being republished in book form by Mr. Johnston.

The Bible hardly requires comment. I would advise a Red Letter Testament and the recent American Standard Version as useful supplements to the King James Version with which we are all so familiar. They serve to bring the ideas to our minds in a fresh manner and, in consequence, often with a fresh meaning.

Our main task, however, is to give a list of the best mystical books of devotion, published in the West, since the time of Christ, and to this we shall devote our remaining space, taking them up chronologically:

The Confessions of St. Augustine (A. D. 354-430): too well known to require description. Many have found this work inspiring because after a riotous youth St. Augustine became converted and turned into a good mystic. It can be obtained at any book store. The best translation is by Dr. Pusey.

The next few hundred years were barren of works that have stood the test of time. We must skip to the great St. Bernard (1091-1153) to find an author still widely read. Some of St. Bernard's Letters and Sermons are very fine. His *Life and Works,* by S. J. Eales, will give an adequate idea of his power and spirit of devotion. Together with the Scotch or Irish Richard St. Victor, a contemporary, he dominated the spirit of religious thought for two hundred years and can be said to begin mediæval mystical literature. Richard's best work in English is *A Very Devout Treatise Named Benjamin,* included in *The Cell of Self-Knowledge,* translated by Gardner. (New Mediæval Library, London, 1910.)

Those who wish to go deeper into the general subject of mystical literature must next look up the writings of a series of women mystics who followed Bernard and Richard St. Victor: St. Hildegarde (1098-1179), St. Elizabeth of Schoenan (1138-1165), the new Gertrude (1251-1291), St. Mechthild of Hackborn (1241-1298), Sister Mechthild of Magdelburg (1212-1299) and finally St. Gertrude The Great (1256-1311). They had between them every variety of subjective experience and mystic vision and have left beautiful and suggestive accounts of their religious life. *The Exercises of St. Gertrude* (London 1863) is the best example of their writings. There is no doubt that Dante read and was much indebted to these women and owed some of his most profound conceptions to them.

St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) comes next in order. Unfortunately he wrote little and left no regular treatise, but every one should have *The Little Flowers of St. Francis,* published by Methuen & Co. in their series entitled The Library of Devotion. His great disciple, the Blessed Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) well expresses his spirit in her *Book of the Divine Consolations,* translated by Mary B. Steegman, 1909. A valuable work, *The Mirror of Simple Souls,* by an unknown French author, belongs to this period, but has not, so far as I know, yet been printed. There is also a beautiful fragment of the work of Margery Kempe (about 1290), Anchoress of Lynn, published in *The Cell of Self Knowledge,* mentioned above, which is all that survives of her writings. *The Cell of Self-Knowledge,* besides containing this, and Richard St. Victor's work, has five other translations, three of which are by unknown authors, and can be obtained in no other form, *The Epistle of Prayer, The Epistle of Discretion,* and *The Discerning of Spirits.*

Richard Rolle (1300-1349) is the first of a series of brilliant English mystical writers. His chief work, *The Form of Perfect Living,* is as alive and vivid and useful to-day as it was six hundred years ago. Almost at the same time appeared one of the greatest and least known of all devotional books, *The Divine Cloud* or "The Cloud of Unknowing," as it used to be called. It introduced the spirit of Dionysius the Areopagite into England and is almost pure Vedantin in tone and in its treatment of the inner life. The only edition I know is that by Rev. H. Collins, London, 1871, and is not easy to find. It is worth the trouble, especially to members of the T. S. who are used to the Eastern methods.

John Tauler (1300-1361) has already been much written about in the QUARTERLY. *The Inner Way* (Library of Devotion) and *The Following of Christ* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1910) will give a good idea of this great man. Tauler was followed by the celebrated group of German mystics. Henry Suso (1300-1365) who should be studied in his autobiography, is now thought to be the author of *Theologia Germanica,* another of the world's great mystical books. A new edition, published in The Golden Treasury Series, by Susanna Winkworth, 1907, makes it easy to secure.

A Little Book of Eternal Wisdom, London, 1910, has long been credited to Suso, but authorities like Poulain now say that Rulman Merswin (1310-1382), one of the Friends of God, is the author. Van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381) has been made available and has attracted attention recently by Maeterlinck's translation (into French) of his *Spiritual Marriage.*

The Imitation of Christ, said to be the most widely read book in the world next to the Bible, is generally attributed to Thomas of Kempden or Thomas à Kempis; often erroneously referred to as *St.* Thomas à Kempis. He has not been canonized because of this very doubt about his being the author of the *Imitation.* A manuscript exists in his handwriting, but that is not proof, for he spent a very long life transcribing religious works. That was the *raison d'etre* of the Brethren of the Common Life, to which order he belonged. Their occupation and finally their existence passed away with the invention of printing. Thomas was born in 1380 or 1381 near Cologne. *The Imitation of Christ* was given to the world about 1441. He died in 1471. The treatise was called *The Ecclesiastical Music;* the name now used being properly the sub-title of the first book. It was, of course, written in Latin, and the original is in either Rhyme or Rhythm. It has been translated many times. The most familiar version follows an edition which appeared in 1633, by Anthony Hoskins, a Jesuit. It contains many omissions and many mistranslations. The best modern translation, or edition, is that of Prof. C. Bigg of Oxford, published by Methuen & Co., of London. Modern scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, now feel sure that Thomas wrote most, if not all of this wonderful book. It should be in every library of devotion.

Another Dutch mystic, Gerard of Zutphen, wrote *The Spiritual Ascent,* which is a valuable treatise, much loved by Thomas à Kempis, who wrote a biography of the author.

Walter Hilton (died 1396) and Juliana of Norwich (1343-1443?) end the stream of English mysticism for nearly two hundred years. *The Scale of Perfection* by Hilton (London, 1908), and *Revelations of Divine Love* by Juliana (London, 1901), are books to possess and read and reread. Juliana, in particular, was a poet as well as a seer, and her work is considered the most beautiful of all English mystical writings.

The *Letters* and the *Dialogues* of St. Catharine of Siena (1347-1380) must be added to our library, for she was one of the very greatest of the Saints, and is an exemplar of the practical work, in the worldly sense, that can be performed successfully by the nun and the contemplative. Nothing but the fact that she *did* get her directions from Jesus Christ himself, as she claimed, can explain her success. Algar Thorold's translations of her *Dialogues* (London, 1896) and Vida Scudder's Edition of her *Letters* (London, 1905) make her work available to English readers. Those who wish to read more about her can get Edmund Gardner's *St. Catharine of Siena* (London, 1907) or *The Mystic Bride,*

by Mrs. Aubrey Richardson, published this year by T. Werner Laurie of London.

Next on our list come the works of the Venerable Blosius (1506-1565). He was a prolific writer and his *Mirror for Monks* is one of the most popular of devotional books in Catholic communities or among those who are not repelled by a distinctly Catholic method. He also wrote *A Book of Spiritual Instruction, Comfort for the Faint-Hearted,* and *The Sanctuary of the Faithful Soul,* which have been translated recently by an English Passionist, Bertrand Wilberforce, and can be secured in London. *The Mirror for Monks* gives the essence of Blosius' method and is probably enough for our library. *The Spiritual Combat* by Lorenzo Scupoli (1529-1610), an Italian mystic of renown, is a necessary addition to the list. It is published in the Library of Devotion.

This brings us to the great group of Spanish mystics, who lived in the 16th century. St. Teresa (1515-1582), St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), St. Peter of Alcantara (1499-1562) and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591). They all wrote and we can get in English, and we should by all means have in our library *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, *The Dark Night of the Soul,* by St. John of the Cross, *The Interior Castle* by St. Teresa, and *Pax Animæ,* by St. Peter. We should also get St. Teresa's *Autobiography* (translated by D. Lewis, 3rd Edition, London, 1904).

If we were making a list of the books of the great mystics, we should, of course, include Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) and George Fox (1624-1690), but this is meant to be a devotional library. Augustine Baker's (1575-1641) *Sancta Sophia* or *Holy Wisdom,* is a long-winded but very valuable and useful treatise covering every detail of the spiritual life. Many would find it helpful (London, 1908).

It seems almost trite to add the writings of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) to our list, they are so well known, but our library would be incomplete without them. *On the Love of God* and *Introduction to the Devout Life* are both published in the Library of Devotion.

We must also get *The Practice of the Presence of God* and *The Spiritual Maxims* of Brother Lawrence (1611-1691). These are published in the Heart and Life Booklets (H. R. Allenson, London).

The Spiritual Guide, by Molinos (1640-1697) (Library of Devotion) is a useful addition; so also are the works of Madame Guyon (1648-1717) the great French quietist. *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer,* is published in the Heart and Life Booklets, while this and her other devotional work *Spiritual Torrents* were translated by A. W. Marston, London, 1875.

Maxims of the Saints and *Meditations for a Month,* by Fénélon, published in the Heart and Life Booklets, are an entirely inadequate representation of Fénélon's genius. One must go to his *Letters to Men* and *Letters to Women* to get the full benefit of his inspiration and

spiritual learning. Many people like and are helped by the *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,* by William Law (1686-1761), a non-juring clergyman who was influenced by Boehme and who was almost alone in keeping the fire of mysticism burning in the England of his day.

The Hidden Life of the Soul, excerpts from the writings of the French priest, Père Grou (1731-1803), translated by Mrs. Sidney Lear, is a charming little work. His *Spiritual Maxims* have also been translated but I do not know by whom. During recent years another French priest has been issuing, and is still issuing, delightful little leaflets from time to time, under the title *Paillettes d'Or.* Some of these have been translated by Mrs. Charlotte M. Yonge, and are called *Gold Dust.*

Our list comes to an end with a very valuable and remarkable book, published this year by Watkins, London, called *The Path of Eternal Wisdom,* by John Cordelier. It is the best devotional book, outside of our Theosophical books, which has been written for many years and represents the most exalted form of Christian Mysticism.

The above list, which of course cannot be exhaustive, still does, I think, fairly well cover the field and contains examples of books which will supply the needs of nearly every kind of temperament. They are all treatises on the inner life, and they are designed to teach people how to live the inner life, giving detailed instructions for every step on the way. The obstacles we shall meet are described, as are the means for overcoming them; weaknesses and doubts are set forth and analysed; warnings given; experiences related for our guidance; and all by people who knew what they were writing about and who had lived what they are describing. It is that fact which gives vitality to these books and has safe-guarded them throughout the ages while hundreds of thousands of other works have perished.

I would advise beginning with the simpler books, such as, to give the names of three or four, Fénélon's *Letters to Men* and *Letters to Women, The Spiritual Maxims* and *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, and the *Mirror for Monks* by Blosius. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius is also excellent.

JOHN BLAKE.

"It is rare when injustice, or slights patiently borne, do not leave the heart at the close of the day, filled with marvellous joy and peace."

LETTERS TO FRIENDS

II

Dear Friend:

I HAVE your letter, bitterly complaining that I have withheld from you the help and teaching you say I could have given, and which you deem our personal friendship entitled you to expect from me. You tell me that I have always failed you,—failed to sense and meet your need, failed to recognize that you had found the Master, failed to perceive that the only motive in your life was to do his will,—and that this constant failure of mine and my reserve and aloofness have bred a resentment which stands as a barrier between you and the peace which you can only know as you feel in harmony with all about you. You ask me to remove this barrier.

I cannot offer you the justification of myself which you desire. Nor would it profit you at all for me to do so even if I could. Not only because when self-justification enters, friendship ends; but because our barriers are always in ourselves and never in circumstances or in others. It is not I, nor my neglect nor failure, real or imagined, which is the barrier to your peace; but it is your own resentment. And this is in you, not in me. It is true that if I could place myself before you in a more favorable light it would give you some temporary easement and palliate your feeling. But it would be only a palliative and the cause of the trouble would remain untouched. Sooner or later you must face in yourself that which prompts this resentment; and, as you have asked my aid, it is better for me to help you to do this now, even though its first effect be to increase the intensity of your feeling, than to attempt to cover it over or to remove only the occasion for its manifestation.

Let me be quite clear upon this point before we proceed further. Over the circumstances and environment of our lives we have little or no control. We have limitless control over the character of our own reaction from them, and what is to be their effect upon ourselves. We cannot spread a carpet over all growing things, over the rocks and stubble and brambles of the earth. But we can shoe our own feet. We cannot remove evil and unkindness and neglect from all those with whom our lives bring us into contact. We cannot, dare not even if we could, safeguard ourselves from the pain which these can give us. But we can make this pain a blessing, not a curse. We can make it yield us strength and courage and clear insight, tenderness and breadth of charity which is not blind to fault. We can learn to suffer and not grow bitter, and, above all, we can learn that there is no single thing in all this wide universe that can come to us without bringing us a gift,—will we but take it.

There is in every man's spirit an alchemy which, as we learn to use it, transmutes outer evil into inner good, and hardship into growth. By this alchemy alone can you win and hold the peace which you desire.

Let us grant that I am guilty of all of which you accuse me. You do not wish to grant it. You wish to be persuaded it is not true. But that is only to evade the issue. If not I, then sooner or later some other will manifest this same attitude which now you find so intolerable in me. Is your peace to be dependent on another's attitude? Why should what is in another be so intolerable to you? Can we only be happy if we are justly appreciated, not slighted nor neglected? Can another stand as a barrier between us and the great Master who called sinners and outcasts to his love and whose kingdom is within? If we think so, it is not the Master whom we have found, but a deification of our own self-righteousness. Why is it that you feel this burning resentment? What is it in you that is injured?

First it is vanity. We think that we put vanity away when we cease to care, overly much, about our clothes, or to look with self-approval in the glass. But this is mere childishness, and vanity is not mere childishness. It meets us at every turn when we look out anew upon the world about us and see the image of ourselves reflected back to us from its myriad mirrors. Most men live for and from such reflections; their lives moved by the external stimulus of these images of themselves coming back to them with magic colour and deceptive potency. And this is vanity. Vanity is not only self-approval. It differs from pride in this: that its self-approval must be fed by its reflections. To one it is the halo of fame he must see about the image of himself. To another it is the echo of his power that he must hear resounding from the outer world; to yet another it is the aroma of fair deeds that must come as incense to his nostrils. But all alike are vanity—the mere reflections of the self as we would see and have it seen—a glamorous and enchanted world which holds us spell-bound and enthralled.

But glamorous as these reflections are, there is something within us which keeps whispering they are unreal. It is the innate integrity of the soul which is never wholly blinded, but knows its kingdom must be inner and not outer, and that these things are outer things—even the best and highest of them—even the aroma of fair deeds. And though we listen but little to this inner voice, and ask ourselves in answer if such deeds, as here we see, are not both real and good, yet it makes us a little restless, a little keener than before to be reassured by the beauty of the image which we see. So if then it happen that there be but one direction where we look and see no halo, listen and hear no echo, scent and smell no perfume, our very existence seems in danger and our whole world threatens to melt away into a mist of shadow. We have built our house upon the shifting sands.

It is not easy, much less pleasant, to realize that the greater part of

all our suffering is but injured vanity. It is still harder to recognize how deeply it enters into the motives of our lives and colours all our works. To do this requires some knowledge and experience of a life that is not vain—into which no image of the self as actor or enjoyer enters. To those who live in reflections such an experience would seem utter annihilation, not only of themselves but of their whole world. And so, in unconscious dread, in the mere blind instinct of self-preservation, they cling to the delusive shadows of their works, the images of themselves they see about them, and strive to alter the mirrors, not the reality, till they see themselves again as they would be.

From vanity springs jealousy. And this is the second thing which is wounded when neglect or reserve or aloofness appears in the attitude of others toward us. If vanity is subtle so also is jealousy. Each takes a thousand forms; each carries the other in its train; and both mask themselves against our recognition,—the more impenetrably, the higher courts they enter. In crudely physical natures we see them readily for what they are; but when our desires for ourselves have been moulded on a higher model, and the center of our life advances to the psychic and emotional planes, then their unmasking requires a courageous honesty of self-examination it is not easy to command. We wish to think of ourselves as loving, and as serving those we love; as shedding gracious kindliness, dispensing charity, radiating peace and light, a source of strength and help to all about us. We tell ourselves, and tell ourselves truly, that these are high and noble aims. The model is indeed good. But the desire to see ourselves in its form and guise is vanity pure and simple—differing not at all from the desire to see ourselves as beautiful, famous or admired. And if, when we find someone who seems not to require our charity or to recognize our light or to turn to us for the help and peace he finds elsewhere,—if then we find bitter resentment springing up in us against him and his refusal of what we offer, we may know that in essence our feeling differs no whit from the blind jealous rage of thwarted vanity and ambition which an actress may feel, when applause is withheld from her and given to a rival; or which may prompt to murder when drink is withheld from a drunkard. We, too, are drunkards of vanity, living on self-adulation and the incense of our own reflected perfections.

You will accuse me of again misunderstanding you wholly—of refusing to see the purity and selflessness of your feeling and desire of loving service. But we are not wise to consider ourselves exempt from the great snares and mirages of human life. Granted that there is purity and selflessness and genuine depth of noble love in your desire to serve. The question remains how much of vanity and jealously are mingled with them. When a man is ill the physician does not speak of what is sound, but seeks that which is diseased and the extent and origin of the poison in his veins. There is one test which, if honestly applied,

reveals the answer: To what extent do we desire that happiness may come to those we love, that good may be done in the world, in which we have no part or share as actor, agent or enjoyer, but which comes through other hands than ours and bears no trace or reflection of ourselves upon it? To what extent are we willing to be unnecessary and as naught?

Let us remember that these questions cannot be answered by assertions. We do not become selfless by the self-assertion that we are so. It is written: "It is easy to say 'I will not be ambitious'; it is not so easy to say: 'When the Master reads my heart, He will find it clean utterly.' . . . One fancies he has removed his interest from self, but he has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to the things which concern his larger span of life. Do not let yourself be easily deceived by your own heart. For now at the threshold a mistake can be corrected. But carry it on with you and it will grow and come to fruition, or else you must suffer bitterly in its destruction."

It is to minimize this suffering that I write this letter in answer to your request, though it imperil still further the friendship you tell me my attitude has so impaired. The pain of your resentment is but part of the larger suffering that vanity, jealousy, and self-will must always breed. And to these presences, the great enemies of us all, you resolutely close your eyes. It is important above all things that you should recognize them in yourself and face them as your deadliest foes—the traitors within your gates which stultify and poison all you seek to do or be, and every relationship into which you enter.

I have written of vanity and jealousy. But still more dominant in your life is self-will. You have not learned the alphabet of tolerance. Differences, even minor differences of opinion upon trivialities, when your view is not agreed to, weigh upon you as an insufferable burden. You would have all men conform to your standard, pursue your ideals, seek happiness or service or rest where they exist for you. And you do not see that in consequence your will is constantly pressing upon those about you, necessitating either a surrender of themselves or ceaseless opposition, with the knowledge that they are causing you nervous strain and suffering. For against all obstacles to your own will you throw yourself with a reckless disregard of consequences that makes mortal issues of the commonplaces of daily life.

How can I help you to see this,—to see that your great need is to subordinate your own will, to cultivate passivity, to let differences lie, and to let others be unwise or mistaken or uncomfortable, if that be what they desire? If you think of it, putting yourself in the place of others, will you not perceive that there is as much self will in insisting upon being last as in struggling to be first; in pressing hospitality as in withholding it; in refusing to receive as in refusing to give? Will you

not see, further, that if to open a topic of discussion means that it must be fought out into all its ramifications until agreement or flat opposition results, or if what is said is always given a personal application, that then only such topics as are wholly impersonal can be raised in safety? And it does little good to put an obvious bridle on your speech, if your mind and will continue to press upon the theme in silence. The strain is evident, and what is outwardly repressed at the moment is only pent up to break forth with increased intensity later on. It is the will itself which needs the restraint of tolerance and respect for the will, the opinions and the reticences of others.

No friendship can endure that does not respect the silences of friendship. No friendship can stand save in complete liberty,—of will, of opinion, of action. And silence is not respected, nor liberty accorded, where its exercise is resented.

I venture to think that when you tell me you have found the Master, and seek only to do his will, you do not realize the meaning of the words you use. To find the Master is to find a blaze of light in whose white radiance our sin stands out, unveiled and naked, and fills us with an intensity of self-loathing and abasement that would consume us where we stand, save for the compassion of his love. We long to be as nothing, but what we are is there in all its hideous unlikeness. There are no exceptions to this experience. Neither saint nor seer nor warrior has ever stood before the Master and not known its truth. Those who have passed through it will tell you that no trial of darkness is comparable to this trial of light—to the self-revelation which comes with the light of the Master's face. If you have not received the teaching you think has been given me, and which you deem I should have given you, it is because you have not wanted it. Even now you do not want it,—though you have asked for it. But because you have asked, and because, if I could, I would give much to help you, I have answered. That which you have found and thought the Father is a mirage of your own making, full of emotion, full also of the poison of self. You are as one dwelling in a black pit, filled with poisonous vapours that you cannot see, but whose walls are lined with phosphorus. If you touch them rightly they glow with many colours, and there is light and beauty and reflection. Before these walls you stand entranced and do not know that you are in a pit where the pure sunshine does not enter. As in Dante's Inferno the only way of escape was from its lowest depths up along the back of Lucifer, so from this pit of self the only road leads through its deepest blackness. There comes a time, therefore, when our trance must break, when, in pity, the phosphorescence is withdrawn and no longer answers to our touch. One by one the lights fail us and go out. We are left in darkness. But with the darkness, and the dread and pain of it, comes the craving for escape.

All this has been written and described in many places, for it is the

growth, the fruition, and the death, of vanity and self-will. It is a stage in the life of the soul through which all pass who do not tear those things from their hearts at the outset of the Path. You will find in *Fragments:*

"Behind all striving and seeming, behind all laughter and tears, behind our failures and the successes which are often more disheartening lie the eternal verities of existence. And by and by, like children weary of playing, we rise and put away our toys. There falls then a hush, a silence, and to many a sense of blank. Suddenly it seems the great tide of life has rushed past us and left us alone. The world which had been so teeming with interests, so crowded with occupations and enjoyments, has, in a flashing turn of consciousness, become a world of shadows; the hands we held so warmly in our own have slipped away; the flowers we were weaving fall faded and unheeded. Why this has come about and how, is part of the mystery, but come it has, and life is no more the same for him forever.

"This is the critical moment, when the weak soul faints and falters and succumbs. But the strong soul, crying: At least *I* am! struggles forward, and struggling, finds that he plunges deeper and deeper in the silence and the dark. Still move he must, live he must, terror of unconsciousness goading him, faith in that one knowledge of his own existence the dim rush light by whose faltering flicker he must seek his way. Since I am, then God must be! his agony wrings from him, and lo! his rush light has grown brighter and the path more clear.

"The turmoil of the world lies far behind. Wars may be raging there and nations rise and fall. He heeds it not; the darkness has enveloped him and the giant conflict of the universe is nothing to him who is struggling madly for his life and freedom, swallowed in its awful gloom.

"On, on, oh struggle on. These are the birth throes of the living soul. The toys are put away, the flowers are faded. Yea, but God has other flowers that do not fade, and He has gifts worthy the soul of man.

"Out on the sunlit plain the warrior stands, and ministering angels bear to him the blessings of the gods. He finds a new heaven and a new earth, dew dipped in morning freshness. Men of shining mien and eyes of understanding meet him here. Here is no jar nor fret, but a serene stillness full of rhythmic cadences. A soul is born. Through darkness and through pain and a wild conflict hand to hand with death, he has entered into life. The Path is found."

There is no easy road to these "sunlit plains," no escape from self which is not fraught with pain. Before you can even understand these things the bubble of vanity must be pricked and with it your whole world will seem to fall into an abyss of nothingness. But if you would find and tread the Path, here is the way to it.

"Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it. It lies fruitfully in the heart of the devoted disciple as well as in the heart of the man of desire. Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death. And it is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himselves innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seems to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured: it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life: it may not come until the last. But, O disciple, remember that it has to be endured, and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the Eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought."

There is no other way for you than this; and no other can tread it for you. You will suffer,—not with a suffering you take upon yourself by your own will, but with a pain that overcomes your will. And this too is necessary. From where you are, only such suffering as this can lift you. If you will read further in *Light on the Path,* you will see why this is so.

"In the early state in which man is entering upon silence, he loses knowledge of his friends, of his lovers, of all who have been near and dear to him: and also loses sight of his Teachers and of those who have preceded him on his way. I explain this because scarce one passes through without bitter complaint. Could but the mind grasp beforehand that the silence must be complete, surely this complaint need not arise as a hindrance to the Path. Your Teacher or your predecessor may hold your hand in his, and give you the utmost sympathy the human heart is capable of. But when the silence and the darkness come, you lose all knowledge of him; you are alone and he cannot help you, not because his power is gone, but because you have invoked your great enemy. By your great enemy I mean yourself. If you have the power to face your own soul in the darkness and silence, you will have conquered the physical or animal self which dwells in sensation only."

But though you must suffer, this suffering may be long or short. Pray that you may have the strength to make it short. You have both strength and power of obedience when you can free them from yourself. Pray that you may do this. Pray, humbly and on your knees, that you may recognize in yourself the vanity, jealousy and self-will which are poisoning your life. And pray that you may gain the humility and self-abasement that will enable you through self-subordination to use the will of others to help you conquer in your battle against your own.

Does this seem vague to you? Will you tell me that every day of your life you have done this—or its equivalent? I do not think that

what you have done has been its equivalent; but if you wish some concrete thing to do, do this. Turn to the man who is nearest to you, living in the same house with you, whom all these years you have thought to help and influence aright, and make with him the first great *volt-face* which your whole life needs. Resolve that for one whole year you will subordinate your will to his, be he right or wrong. That you will permit yourself even in thought, much less in speech, no criticism of him. That when deficiencies or faults appear in him you will turn your eyes from them, and looking upon your own instead, match fault for fault. That you will not answer back or argue or appeal. That you will not question. That in all which concerns him, you will be only the servant of his will or whim, cheerfully, quietly obedient—not asking orders, not making your submissiveness obvious, not pressing yourself upon him,—fulfilling literally, to the utmost of your power, whatever wish he may express.

If you have the strength to do this you will doubtless do many things which, in your opinion, will seem mistaken. You will have the satisfaction, however, of acquiring the virtue of obedience. And you will have begun the conquest of your will, and entered the Path which will lead you to "the sunlit plain."

Faithfully yours,
JOHN GERRARD.

"We are sons of yesterday, not of the morning. The past is our mortal mother, no dead thing. Our future constantly reflects her to the soul. Nor is it ever the new man of to-day which grasps his fortune, good or ill. We are pushed to it by the hundreds of days we have buried, eager ghosts. And if you have not the habit of taking counsel with them, you are but an instrument in their hands."

GEORGE MEREDITH.

WHY I JOINED THE T. S.

IT took ten years to remove my prejudice against the T. S.—and a portion of my conceit. I came first to know something of the society after leaving college. During college years my interest in religion seemed ended. For religion appeared something aloof from and hostile to the world of art in which I was interested, and for which I was sacrificing everything else. After the breaking of home and college conections a new environment brought me into contact with Unitarians—a form of religion until then more unknown than Islamism or Buddhism. I began regularly to attend Unitarian meetings, and, through the people I met there, I came into touch with many sorts of "liberal" and "progressive" movements, such as socialism, woman-suffrage, and theosophy. As I prided myself on being "liberal" and "progressive," I felt a certain responsibility toward everything that should swell the great tide of liberalism. Consequently, after reading a page or two of some theosophical propaganda literature, I took delight in calling myself a theosophist, when in the presence of orthodox church-goers. This continued for a year or two when I went to Paris. There my interest was wholly in literature and art, and after months of artistic revelry I returned to America—to be depressed and dissatisfied with everything that had previously pleased or interested me. American daily life was vulgar, prosaic, and hideous. I shut myself away from it in a tower of French poetry. To my consternation, the Unitarian meetings also, and their connotations, were impossible. The cathedrals of Amiens and Paris, in which I had boasted merely an artistic interest, had made it impossible for me to draw any semblance of religious emotion from Unitarian logic. In this bankruptcy, I began again, almost against my will, a study of Dante. I had had courses in Dante both at college and university. But his work had been presented as history and syntax, and professors and students were both frankly bored with the poem which public opinion compelled us to consider. Freed from the historical and syntactical grind, I began to feel the poetry. And in two weeks I made the very important discovery that the poem is connected with life. Next, I saw the semblance between the doctrine of Purgatory and the Eastern teaching of Reincarnation. So I read on and over the poem, through the winter, with increasing admiration and delight. In the spring, by invitation, I made an address on the *Divine Comedy* before my "liberal and progressive" acquaintances, Unitarians, Socialists, Suffragettes and Theosophists. Shortly after, I was told by one of them that I had been talking Theosophy without knowing it, and I was given a copy of *Light on the Path*. My interest in the poem and my dis-

coveries as to its content, led me to look a little into both the T. S. and the Roman Catholic Church. I went to a branch meeting or two. But the people were uninteresting—not of the artistic type. At one meeting they were discussing a blue aura, and they made me feel that they knew nothing about the color blue, or the thing aura, whatever that thing might be. The Roman Church was much more satisfactory. For months I went regularly to Mass—shutting myself up in the tower of poetry when sermon time came. I interviewed priests from time to time to discover if they had any intimations of how vital their doctrines are. I got very little from *Light on the Path.* The book seemed a vague kind of poetry, but all of the first part made me very angry. I understood the first rules to mean that life was to be emptied of all human feeling. I shuddered at the thought of monsters whose eyes were incapable of tears, and who nourished spectral souls on the blood of the heart. The Warrior passage alone attracted me. Still the book was uncommon, and suited for shocking the orthodox, so from time to time I read parts of it to them, pretending clear understanding of its meaning and entire sympathy with its purpose. A copy of the *Gita* came to me shortly after I received *Light on the Path.* I did not understand two words of it, yet I read it. I cannot remember now why I went to the book again and again. It must have been something more than faddishness that drew me to the little volume, every few months. I could not read the *Gita* for long, however. The reading of it was always attended by suicidal impulses. These I attributed directly to the *Gita* and the Oriental teaching of Nirvana, and gradually laid the book aside altogether.

I went to Celebrations of the Mass for a year and a half. Then my church going ended altogether. The beauty of Catholicism made all forms of Protestantism impossibly dreary. To please friends I tried to find the Anglican High Church satisfactory. But it impressed me as an imitation of the Roman *mise-en-scène.* I should have been glad to follow Newman, to lose myself in the pomp and glory of the Roman ritual, to become an actor of hieratic roles. But I knew a time would come when the acting would be intolerable, and I should be wretchedly unhappy. So I tried to find or construct an ideal Catholicism for myself. My construction went well—on paper; as a living form and creed it bound together a dolorous congregation—my own wretched self and the corpses of half-a-dozen saints whose living flaming spirits I was altogether unable to reach.

Thus for several years, five years, things seemed to rest *in statu quo.* I went along complacent in my conceit, and satisfied with my opinions. A certain superficial affection drew friends about me who generously lavished kindness upon me. But I was loveless. I pleased myself with the congeniality of friends, until their limitations and deficiencies became apparent. Then I estranged them, cruelly sacrificing them to a selfish

and irrational demand for human perfection. My days were Epicurean —an endeavor to absorb the visible, audible, tangible loveliness of things. On paper I professed burning love for the race. But the individuals who came into relation with me I found intolerable—and the mass of men was loathsome. I could not enter a railway or ferry without repulsion, wonderment why all those men and women should exist. I was indifferent to their interests and welfare unless they should begin at once to make themselves over on my model. Above all I hated clergymen and churches.

At the end of five years came bankruptcy. Ill in body, and half-mad I had to give over my selfish pursuits, and come nearer to the prosaic lives of average humans. The friends I had treated with horrid unkindness tended me with gentleness and affection; and the men and women above whom I had elevated myself on towered ivory unconsciously rebuked me by their kindly solicitude. I saw that I had been right much of a fool. But it took another year to make me completely insolvent. For a very short time I lay at death's door—and learned a little bit more. I had thought the world needed me, and that I had much to give it. But I saw that I was insignificant. That recognition of unimportance was not discouraging, however. For with it came a recognition of something Real, something kind, that made my nothingness not altogether valueless, since It cared for me. That was my first experience of religion. At the time I knew it was religion, and knew it was different from everything else in my life. I wanted to share it; to give others something of the happiness that had come to me through "acceptance." But I could not speak. I could only run and wander over the mountains, half-drunk with my new happiness, calling on all Saints and creatures to behold the beginning of my conversion toward God.

A few months after my heart had turned that small fraction of a degree away from self toward God, I met my first real Theosophist. It was in this way. I felt I could not return to my former mode of living but must seek something better. I resolved to spend a year in search of "the better." The Theosophist was the first of many people I came upon in my year of search. I did not know him at first as a Theosophist—I might have turned from him if I had—but only as one interested in Oriental thought. The first time I saw him I knew he was different from everybody else, and better. He gave me a little book which pointed the way to "the better." This little book made me desire to stop right there in my search, and learn of him. But he said I must carry out my original intention to travel. So I went, North, East, South, and West, wherever I heard that men were working devotedly for others. I wished to learn so to work, and to find a teacher. I saw many earnest, devoted workers, and much benefit from their endeavors. But to none could I swear allegiance. Disinterested as their endeavors were, they were all laboring for the things that perish. I had dimly glimpsed the

Eternal for a moment, as I lay at death's door. Nothing could satisfy me that was not a striving after the Eternal.

As I travelled I met people to whom I wished to give the little book that my new Theosophist friend had given me. Thus I was brought into connection with the Secretary of the T. S. who, after one or two letters, sent an issue of the QUARTERLY. From this I first learned of the existence of a society. My former acquaintances, Unitarians, Suffragettes, Socialists, Theosophists had told me that theosophists were as bad as Christians, had quarreled with one another, so that the societies had gone to smash. That issue of the QUARTERLY came as a surprise. It contained the article, "Meditation," which brought a new planet to my ken, and it informed me that my new friend was a Theosophist and a member of the society.

I was grateful for his friendship, and grateful to the QUARTERLY. But I was still overflowing with conceit; I could not repress regret that my friend should narrow his splendid ability to the service of a small sect, instead of being a free lance like myself. "Theosophy," I said to myself, "is everywhere, in all lands, in all writers. Madam Blavatsky's formation of a society was a fanatic's mistake, similar to that of all religious leaders; it came out of her desire for a following—self-worship. I approve the Theosophical philosophy but I will not confine myself within the limits of their society."

Soon after I took up again *Light on the Path*, after having forgotten it for several years. I read it in amazement and tears. I had grown up toward it somewhat. It no longer made me angry. It became a light. That book and the life of St. Francis (Assisi) were my sole reading during one summer.

The following autumn I sent in a subscription for the QUARTERLY. I still was hostile to the society, however. But as I worked through the autumn and read the QUARTERLY, I came to recognize that what I had for years been awkwardly trying to do was not antagonistic to the spirit of the T. S. as expressed in the QUARTERLY. I saw that I had blundered stupidly because I knew so little about things. It seemed sensible, therefore, for the sake of what I was trying to do, to endeavor to get some help from the society. It was in this mood that I wrote to my friend—if the T. S. would accept me, I should like to become a member and be taught.

One good the T. S. has given me is the restoration of Christianity. Six months after I became a member of the T. S., I saw that it was my duty to go back into the Church which for ten years I had particularly hated. I had approached the T. S. seeking a substitute among the Eastern religions for the religion I had outgrown. The T. S. soon showed me that I had never known anything about Christianity, and that instead of having outgrown it, I must now begin to grow up toward it. But, above all, through the T. S. I have been given love. Kindly friends

I have always drawn around me only to estrange and alienate them by my self-love. Through the T. S. I have found friends of deeper affection. Their love of me has been so live a flame that it was not quenched or cooled by my selfishness. Their love has burned up a small portion of my selfishness, and has kindled a little flickering flame of love in me.

SPENSER MONTAGUE.

"Meditation may be likened to a prospector pursuing his silent pilgrimage into regions as yet unexplored by him, and with untiring vigor and persistence breaks away the crust and 'pans out' the base material in his search for the 'golden color,' which, when found, stimulates him with renewed energy to delve deeper for the precious 'mother lode,' which will bring to him his heart's desire." L.

WITHIN

The keynote of Theosophy is brotherly love; the keynote of discipleship is "within." The child is father of the man. Theosophy is the child; discipleship is the man.

THE language of religion contains many references to the higher as opposed to the lower. Heaven to man, his highest ideal—the goal of his human striving as well as the life after death—is symbolized as "above." The contrary pole, hell, man's lower nature, is thought of as "below." The Master has told us that the kingdom of heaven is within not above us and that like a grain of mustard seed it is at first the smallest of seeds, but that it grows and spreads out its branches till it is the largest of herbs—a refuge and shelter for many creatures.

Yet saints in the ecstasy of their vision of the kingdom are pictured kneeling, their eyes raised, looking up. How could it be otherwise? If the attempt is made to translate the ecstasy literally, without symbol, painter, canvas, and colors disappear, and the picture is transmuted into a vision perceptible only to the inner eye of other saints. Thus the unsanctified many, capable nevertheless of sincere aspiration, in whom the aspiration of others awakens responsive chords, lose the whole meaning of consecrated lives. For their sakes symbols are used, crude symbols perhaps, material symbols if necessary, but symbols capable by reason of their crudeness, their materiality, of carrying subtle messages to souls that would find them unintelligible if less crude. For their sakes is spiritual truth expressed in terms of human life. By them are symbols to be justified. Yet in so far as a man can see first within, finally independently of the symbol, in so far is he spiritually mature.

In attempting to penetrate to the real meaning hidden behind the symbols of religion, let us take the hint given us and substitute within for above, without or outside for below. By this substitution the direction of advance is changed and the subject at once takes on a new suggestiveness, characterized rather by possibilities of infinite extension than by the chance that anyone of us will ever be in a position to say, or even hear, the last word on the subject. Students of art have noted an advance along this line from mediæval to modern methods of symbolizing holiness. Painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries set a gold plate or rim firmly outside the head of the sanctified. The sentiment of to-day tolerates nothing more external than a faint light emanating from the soul within. Often the expression of a face is made to do duty for the elaborate insignia of a cruder age.

The development of literature is analogous. Mediæval romances of external adventure, tales of the dangers and chivalrous deeds of brave knights, have been gradually superseded by novels where the whole interest is centered on the portrayal and development of character. The miracle play which symbolized the glory of God by mask and hand pieces of gold laid on outside a perfectly material Deity has given place to a type of drama in which the conception of interiorness is strong. For instance, in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" the expression of one man's face and his attitude toward his fellows transforms the sordid life of the home into which he enters into a reflection of his own beautiful spirit. It is not too much to say that the whole great power of this play lies in the loving spirit of one man expressed in look rather than act. And it is a favorable comment on the spiritual maturity of our age that this play, which depends wholly for its appeal on its message, should have been a brilliant dramatic success.

Undoubtedly a similar tendency of direction could be found in the music of the last four centuries. The transition from Bach to Brahms is suggestive enough to a musician, but one must already be a musician to even hear the language of music, much more to decipher its symbolism.

Science, too, once it has acquired the courage to believe that man can know, and dared to look beyond proved and tabulated facts (so soon alas to be disproved and to require retabulation) shows the same tendency of direction. Matter, only recently a somewhat inert, hard, objective substance, has recently revealed itself to scientific experimenters as something quite other than they thought, something finer in quality, less hard and fast in its make up, less objective than they had supposed that it could be, more akin to the force element in nature than to what had commonly been called substance.

To define matter as ions of electricity explains nothing. It merely pushes the mystery one degree inward. But one thing the ion theory does do. It shatters into bits the confident dogmatism of objective realism. And this is much. The scientist who realizes that his confidence in the solid objectivity of nature must be renounced in favor of a tentative belief in a reality more intangible and interior will soon, as he learns by being tentative to be truly scientific, sense the existence of a reality less objective and tangible even than his ions of electricity, lying behind or within them as they have all unseen lain behind or within this husk or shell of existence which we call the universe.

The chemist or the biologist who examines with his microscope any portion of the world of "reality" discovers that all this solid looking substance is but an aggregate of varied and moving particles. Does not this revelation alone destroy all confidence in the impenetrability and ultimateness of the "solid world of reality" in which we live. And if by the aid of the microscope we discover that within the world as seen

by the naked eye is another finer world on which our visible world depends for its existence, which in reality it is, is it not a justifiable method of procedure in a scientist who has learned to be tentative to turn with a certain seriousness to the teaching of *Light on the Path:* the teaching that within the world as the microscope reveals it there lies a mystery which no machinery can probe, a world which is self-illuminated, permanent, the life and substance of this shell of a world; and that this world though real and omnipresent is perceivable only by those who have developed within themselves the faculties by which it can be perceived, otherwise invisible, just as the great world of germs and microbes was invisible till our weak natural sight was supplemented by those laboratory spectacles—the microscope?

Any dogmatic denial of this teaching is as absurd as it is unscientific. Throughout nature as we know it, the more vital parts are hidden within the less vital. The life of man's body resides not in the epidermis but in the interior organs. The husk of the corn, the shell of an acorn, the skin of a snake are dead compared with the more vital parts which they enclose. And the relative inferiority of the outer covering is recognized all through nature. The husk of the corn, the shell of the acorn, the skin of the snake are cast off as worthless when the life within has developed beyond their capacity to contain it. Is it unreasonable to see the force of the analogy applied to man as we know him—to see quite clearly that his entire body with all its wonderful mechanism is a husk, a shell, a mere outer skin, soon thrown off and left to decay where it has fallen, while the life of the young creature develops unhampered, like a prisoner released from bondage? Does the fact that we can not *see* the young immortal weigh in the slightest degree against his existence?

The physical sight of every creature is relative to the development of its organ of vision. The "eye" of the angle worm is no more than a sensitive spot—an eye spot—at the end of its spinal column. By means of this it is conscious of light and darkness and of nothing else. All the great world of varied forms visible to an ordinary dog is to this creature as though it did not exist. And the dog, proud when compared to the angle worm, must be humble when contrasted with man. Take the most alert, the most intelligent dog that ever lived for a walk through beautiful country. What does he *see?* Does he halt to admire the shapely trees or the odd flowers by the wayside? Does the red glory of the sunset or the immensity of the sea draw his attention for one moment from the rabbits or birds on which his whole consciousness is centered. Take him to a concert or, as Professor James suggested, into a library where wise men are conversing. Do the realities which draw us to the concert and the library, which make the music and the conversation determining influences in our lives, exist for him? Would he not say quite confidently, if he could speak, that they were not there? By what right, then, does man, the vain, claim exemption from the law

valid for other creatures that knowledge is relative to the organs of perception in the knower?

Man too is as dependent on his physical eyes as is the angle worm or the dog. And his eyes are hardly better than theirs. They can not even see the life within matter, which is the life of matter, till sharpened by the aid of the microscope. And even the microscope does not reveal those ions of electricity of which our most solid looking matter is composed. Electricity we never see; we infer its existence from its works. So we may infer the existence of the self of man. Does not the difference in working efficiency between a living and a dead body indicate that in the case of the latter the worker has been withdrawn? Does not the vast and intricate working efficiency of nature force us to the conclusion that the Worker is still there? And where can he reside if not within? Above and below are mere forms of speech related to the gravitation of this earth. If the vital part of all that we know lies within it, and if increase of power means increase of fineness as it seems, where should we look for the life and power expressed in the universe if not within.

Aspects of the apparently universal truth of inwardness as the key to progress meet us at every turn. Development along the line of dimensional space mathematically conceived is from without within. The one dimensional being must go within to find the second dimension; the two dimensional being must go within to find the third dimension; and we, three dimensional beings, must look within if we would understand the mystery of the fourth dimension. The presumption is that the analogy holds all the way up (or in) to the complete fulfilment of all dimensional space.

Wireless telegraphy is a fragmentary expression of the same law. Certain things can be done in the visible physical world, certain forces transmitted by well understood media. The atmosphere carries the message of a man who calls to another across the street. But in wireless it is the ether which carries the message which one man sends to another across the sea. And the ether is a medium of which the particles are smaller than the particles of the atmosphere and lie within them. Literally the ether is inside the atmosphere.

The Eastern theory of thought transference carries out the analogy. Within the ether lies the akasa by means of which thoughts can be transmitted regardless of material bounds.

The increase in relative reality marked by a progressive inwardness gives, as has been indicated, increase of power. A man can call a certain distance with his natural voice, but not across the sea. Thought transference appears to be free even from the limitations of wireless. Another characteristic is increase in richness, in fullness of manifestation. A two dimensional space is richer in possibilities, a fuller manifestation of the Great Source than a one dimensional space, a three than a two. Progress is from the mathematical point to infinity. Increase of har-

mony, of oneness, appears to be a concomitant of the increase in fullness of manifestation, but it is hard even to illustrate this point. However, it may be thrown out as a suggestion for the reader to verify as he can that power, fineness, scope of manifestation, and harmony are more marked at each advance on the path of inwardness.

A Master once told his disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The dove-like quality of non-resistance has been much emphasized in Christian literature. The wisdom of the serpent has been pretty generally overlooked. Yet to one who has even the faintest insight into Christ's purpose—what he was trying to accomplish—the non-resistance of his death upon the cross is not more remarkable than the shrewdness of his method of saving men without their knowledge, even against their wills. The same method has been applied in the foundation and development of the Theosophical Society—the same method and for the same end.

Brotherhood, toleration, the comparative study of religions, and psychic research were laid as corner stones of the Theosophical Society. For toleration, though not one of the stated objects, is so fundamental a principle of theosophy and received such emphasis at the inception of the Society that it must be included in any summary of the principles on which it rests. These, though able to maintain their right to consideration on their face value, are not merely the simple and worthy objects which they appear. Each has a greater than itself hidden within it, which, as the stated object is followed begins to reveal itself to the inner eye of the astonished beholder. It is as though a man picking up what seems to be an empty purse should find some inner pocket which is full of gold, as though a college student perfunctorily taking a required course in English prose should chance on the *Sartor Resartus*.

And herein lies the wisdom of the serpent. He who, obedient to the letter of the law, faithfully follows one of the four objects of the Society soon receives the great and surprising revelation that within that object lies another subtler and more far reaching than he could have guessed, leading to heights only yesterday beyond his power to imagine. Starting out, perhaps, with the simple, manly resolve to do his best for his fellow men, he suddenly, sometime—if he really has done his best—awakens to find himself a disciple, well started on the road to liberation. This is the wisdom of the serpent which has taught us to build that which we knew not, that has set us on a path which until well started on our way we were incapable even of conceiving.

Let us take the objects of the Society in order and look within.

The one pledge required of those who join the Theosophical Society, is that they shall help to found the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of man without distinction of race, creed, class (I use this word inten-

tionally), or color. This brotherhood is to be founded on the external plane of our material life, where alone the social distinctions referred to exist. The Theosophical Society, be it remembered, at the time it was founded functioned on the external plane, could function, so far as its ordinary membership was concerned, on no other. Madame Blavatsky distinctly states that the first step toward the kind of brotherhood the Society is attempting to establish is the organization of society depicted by Edward Bellamy in *Looking Backward.**

A letter published in the "Notes and Comments" of the QUARTERLY of January, 1911, endorses this position. "The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner stone, the foundation of the future religions of humanity. To achieve the proposed object a greater, wiser and especially a more benevolent intermingling of the high and low, of the alpha and omega of society, was determined upon. The white races must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations, to call the poor despised 'nigger' Brother. This prospect may not smile to all. He is no Theosophist who objects to this principle." In the same letter the idea that the Theosophical Society should ever drop its noblest title, the "Brotherhood of Humanity, to become a school of philosophy" is vehemently repudiated.

Now what is the significance of all this emphasis on brotherhood materially expressed in a society the foundation and tendencies of which are spiritual? What is the spiritual meaning within the stated object, or has it none?—Just this: the observance of the outer has power to induce the inner; the man who is brotherly to his fellows in all his human relations grows gradually like "the wise" in the *Gita*. "A Brahman full of wisdom and virtue, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a feeder of dogs; in these the wise behold no difference." This, of course, means that the wise has attained to the realization of the unity of all souls with the Oversoul, the higher consciousness of the Vedanta philosophy. It means that by living the brotherhood (neighborliness) of the parable of the good Samaritan the spiritual unity of the fifteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel is attained.

This, therefore, is the method of Jesus who taught the parable of the good Samaritan, the Golden Rule, and the "inasmuch" precepts. And his teaching is reinforced by his example. This was his teaching to the multitudes. To his disciples he revealed the mysteries of the kingdom. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me" has a peculiar significance to a theosophist who applies the rule of inwardness and who knows the Master's habit of speaking for the higher self. It is first to lead the life, then, as effect to cause, to know the doctrine.

Buddha's method was the same, if we are to trust Mr. Edmond

* *Key to Theosophy*, III.

Holmes, and for the same reason.* Four of the five rules in his Code of Moral Law are details of the principle of brotherhood expressed in man's external relations with his fellows.

Such was the method of the Masters who founded the Theosophical Society, and such apparently is their method with the world to-day. Is not all the crude groping after political and social equality, all the rampant, incoherent democratic and socialistic agitation merely the effort of spiritual children to embody the glimpses they have had of the principle of the unity of all life, and who needs must express their vision of unity where they are, if at all—in the darkness of material consciousness. Do not such well-intentioned children deserve to be understood, and their purposes, so far as possible furthered?—as we would help a real child to build a tower of blocks that we knew could last but a moment, if thereby he might learn what was vastly more important for him to know than how to lay one block on another—the working of the law of gravitation.

Any other method of attaining the end of us all—the higher consciousness—appears to be as fallacious as dangerous. To build a house without first laying out a broad ground plan and looking carefully to the foundation is to build badly. The foolish man who hears the sayings of Jesus and doeth them not is likened by him to "a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth;" the wise man who hears and does them is he who "built an house, digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock." The house of the foolish man was destroyed by the flood; the other remained standing.

To overlook the claims of external brotherhood is like attempting to solve the problems of trigonometry before one has gained a thorough knowledge of arithmetic. The only justification for the mathematician who ceases to study arithmetic is that he has so thoroughly mastered this elementary science that its laws have become automatic. The only justification for the theosophist who ceases to study and practise brotherhood externally is that the laws of external brotherhood have already become a part of his nature—that he has joined the company of the wise, who, regarding all men as the soul, literally see no difference. Each plane binds in relation to that above it. On each the self must be mastered before the student advances to the next.

The architects of our Society designed the plan of a tower and gave it to us to build. They called the tower the higher consciousness and they drew it very beautiful and very high. It was to reach clear to the heavens and from its summit command a far view of the surrounding earth. The ground plan they called toleration. The foundation they named brotherhood. Little by little the builders were set to work as they were able. Stone-masons were needed as well as artist builders. First the ground plan was laid out, broad and spacious so that there should be

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* *The Creed of Buddha*, IV.

room for all people; then the foundations were placed deep and firm, strengthened with steel beams of endurance and chains of human kindness. Not till this had been done could the superstructure be raised, as fair and high as the ground plan was wide and the foundations strong and deep. Could a tower be built otherwise? Yes, but not with safety. A tower could be built on a narrow ground plan and weak foundations, but it would not stand. It would totter and perhaps fall with the first strong wind that shook it. Happy the builders of such a tower if the first wind is not too strong and if they still have time to reinforce the ground work and so save the superstructure from ruin.

The dangers of overlooking the external plane can not be too strongly emphasized. Faults not overcome there return in finer form. The snake of self reappears with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple. Selfishness not killed out becomes spiritual selfishness—the desire to save one's own soul—and defeats its own end even by seeking it. Ambition and vanity become the desire for spiritual leadership. An autocratic temper evolves into the dogmatism of creed or of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Pride becomes spiritual pride; and "He who thinks himself holier than another,—who believes himself wise, or in any way superior to his fellow men, is incapable of discipleship." The interfering nature, the busy-body, takes on itself the duty of another, "full of danger." Anyone of these weaknesses unconquered below is enough to neutralize the progress of a lifetime. The chain breaks at its weak link. The tower falls for the lack of one bolt. The pity of it!

So long as we live on this plane it is necessary to express ourselves here. We must therefore be brotherly or unbrotherly, there is no third path. The good Samaritan and the thieves are set against one another as alternatives in the parable. If, like the priest and the Levite, we attempt the medium way and go by on the other side, we at once range ourselves with the thieves. "Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin." The Master expressed himself clearly in regard to those who in the parable attempted the impossible feat of neutrality.

We exist not for ourselves but for the world. Those who see theosophy through us know nothing of our higher consciousness. They see and recognize the external fruits alone and are drawn to or alienated from theosophy according to those fruits. And we *are* our brothers' keepers.

Toleration is an aspect of brotherhood. It means more than allowing a man who disagrees with us to express himself and still live. It means understanding, imaginative sympathy, and finally love: for the man who understands another inevitably loves him. If admiration and respect are out of the question, compassion remains. And compassion is also an avenue on which love freely walks. The more spiritual love becomes the more it partakes of the nature of compassion. Does any one deny that Christ loved the human race? If not, would anyone

venture to suggest that admiration or even respect was the basis of his love?

Barring inevitable illness and death most of the troubles in life spring out of misunderstandings. Two men see a thing from different standpoints and accordingly emphasize its different aspects. They believe themselves to be hostile to one another, irreconcilable. Lacking the power to see themselves as others see them, they may each be the victim of the same limitation, or they may really be emphasizing different aspects of the same truth. A catholic sees the value of the collective consciousness in religion; a protestant recognizes the importance of individual initiative. They stand opposed to one another on a basis of antagonism which is a mere figment of their fancy acting on the basis of their ignorance. A large intellectual toleration would recognize the evils that have always attended the attempt to ignore either one of these supplementary factors. Toleration of the heart intuitively teaches the same lesson. No system lives by the error that it contains but by its intrinsic rightness. Each man holds his opinion because of the truth he sees in it. That particular truth he sees; other equally true truth he misses.

But there is an even deeper significance to toleration. The Theosophical Society has often been likened to an orchestra. An orchestra produces the grandest music, the highest harmony, the most complete unity. Yet an orchestra is made up of instruments differing as radically from one another as the violin, the horn, and the drum. Stringed instruments alone could never bring forth symphonies, neither could wind instruments, nor drums. These different instruments are not antagonistic to one another in the production of harmony. They are supplementary. The jarring of their different tone qualities is as necessary to harmony as the jarring of chords of the seventh or even of interloping sharps and flats is to the peace and unity of the tonic triad.

Our opponent must be endured; he must be understood; and finally he must be loved as our best friend. He is no longer antagonistic but supplementary. He adds to our spiritual life elements which we, because of our limitations, could never get from our own natures, and which because our friends are of our choosing, we could never get from them. By faithfully carrying out the theosophical principle of toleration we learn the meaning of spiritual unity which is heightened and strengthened by differences bravely overcome.

Brotherhood and toleration belong to the exoteric side of theosophy, yet unfolding we find them laden with esoteric truth. The comparative study of religions and the investigation of the psychic powers latent in man are esoteric at the start. Have they too a deeper meaning hidden within?

The study of any great religion shows that it contains a revelation of an order of nature higher than the order in which we consciously

live, a revelation also of a place or state to which we are introduced at death. The directions are given for the attainment of that state. A close comparison of descriptions and directions of guidance prove them to be identical. Each Teacher is describing the same thing—the Path and its goal. Thus by entering upon the comparative study of religions, ingeniously enough, we stumble upon the teachings of occultism hidden within. Seeing these teachings from so many different standpoints, yet always the same, the conviction bursts upon us with the force of a revelation, that these great Teachers agree in their description of the path and of its goal because it is one path they are describing and one goal, a true path and a true goal that they know.

When we recognize that the path is for us to tread and accordingly begin to tread it we have become disciples. This is to investigate the psychic powers latent in man. Looking within for a hidden meaning we see at first faint letters scrawled. If we fasten our attention firmly and persistently on the dim outlines we soon find them growing clearer till finally we can spell out the word. Then the vision grows before us as we watch breathlessly, a vision of the meaning of the whole of life advancing as it does from the outer to the inner—a vision of immortality. We see immortality no longer as the faint hope of a stricken race, but as a clearly defined fact awaiting verification. The wisdom of serpents has been surpassed, and the harmlessness of doves transformed into positive and far-reaching love.

Truly God has a sense of humor, and must needs laugh outright at the blind gropings of "his wondrous manikins here below": not with the shallow laugh of amusement or satire, but with the deep, sane laugh of clearer insight, the still laugh of infinite joy that is born of finite pain.

LOUISE EDGAR PETERS.

Life is like swimming. The man who struggles anxiously with the water, fearful lest it engulf him, sinks as the result of his own cowardly mistrust. But he who strikes out firmly, confident in the good will of the water to uphold him, lies on its surface as safely as his peace in the heart of a friend.

L. E. P.

A PRIMER OF THEOSOPHY

III

The Nature of Man

"THE development of 'Man,' from his first appearance on the Earth in this Round, forms the subject of the second volume of the *Secret Doctrine.*"

The quotation marks, above, around "Man", point to a condition or conditions of being quite different from anything *we* should call man. If we can conceive of a ball of fire-mist gradually becoming a solid globe, settling into a man-bearing world, and if we see everything on it evolving from a speck of protoplasm to the gigantic forms of antediluvian monsters, is it impossible to imagine man himself going through the same transformations? The carbonic vapors and steaming soil of the early globe could have no effect on such human life and organisms as we are told existed at those remote periods, and the *Secret Doctrine* tells us that it is shown in every ancient scripture and cosmogony that "man evolved primarily as a *luminous incorporeal form,* over which, like the plastic clay around the iron framework of the sculptor, the *physical* frame of his body was built by, through, and from, the lower forms and types of animal terrestrial life."

In studying the nature of man and his environment, we are struck by the omnipresence of the number *seven.* But after a long and careful comparison of these correspondences, it seemed that the principal reason for the omnipresence of this number lay in its relation to the phenomena of *life,* and in fact the *Secret Doctrine* says that in our world the rhythm of life is in *sevens,* because that is the rhythm of our Mother the Moon, who in dying imparted her life to her child the Earth, according to the great law regulating the cosmic forces. Other planets and stars and solar systems, have other rates of vibration; in them the rhythm of life throbs faster or slower as the case may be. The Sun is the heart of our solar system, and there is a regular circulation of the Life-Essence throughout that system, like that of the blood in the body, only instead of a few seconds it takes the solar blood ten or eleven years to complete its rounds, and the astronomers are beginning to recognize this rhythm as the cause of the recurrence of sun-spots.

To return to the evolution of man—we are told that the first human stock was a reproduction, by higher and semi-divine beings of their shadowy selves. They "became" the First Race, just as the "eternal cell" of which Weismann speaks, became the endless number of cells into which it subdivided. When the Earth had become dry land, the

Spirits of the Moon came to fashion the astral body of man, the shadowy prototypes of future human beings..

These "lunar ancestors" as they are called, bear the same relation to the physical body of man that the Moon bears to the physical Earth. As the Moon formed the model, and still controls many of the phenomena of Earth-life, (the rhythm of diseases, of the tides, of generation, etc.), so the astral body still gives the model of the physical form, and controls the ebb and flow of its energies. But as these "lunar ancestors" corresponded to the elemental kingdoms preceding the mineral, and were devoid of the ray of Universal Mind, they could only give birth to astral man, a phantom with neither form nor mind.

"The Solar Ancestors" properly so-called, could and did, impart to this astral body a semblance of life (for from the Sun comes that great flood of vital force that vivifies all nature), but they could not give man that sacred spark which expands into the flower of human reason and self-consciousness, for they had it not to give.

It is the Solar Ancestors alone who could complete man, that is, make of him a self-conscious, almost a divine being—a god on earth. But as they were devoid of the grosser *creative fire* they were unable to create *physical* man. The Lunar Ancestors, though possessed of creative fire, were devoid of the higher intellectual element, and could only give birth to the astral man, the model of the physical. The reason why the Solar Ancestors could not give to man the "sacred spark" just referred to, is because they were too divine and pure, too near to the Absolute Cause of all things. To complete the nature of *septenary man,* to unite his three lower principles with the spiritual Monad, two connecting principles are needed, *Mind* and *Desire,* or the emotional soul. It would be impossible for the Monad to dwell in a form without these, except in an *absolutely latent* state, as in the higher animals.

We find primeval man, then, described as ethereal, devoid of compactness, and *Mindless.* He had no middle principle to serve him as a medium between the *highest* and the *lowest,* the spiritual man and the physical brain, for he lacked *mind.* For the Monad, the Ray of Universal Mind, has no hold upon the mere form. It cannot affect the form where there is no agent of transmission. But as no process of evolution is sudden or unprepared for, even the human mind developed by degrees, and although the First and Second Races were not what we call men, but merely rudiments of the future human beings, still even among these appeared here and there some faint foreshadowing of the intelligence to come.

The *Commentary* sums up the early Races in a few words: *"First* came the *Self-Existent* on this Earth. They are the 'Spiritual Lives,' projected by the absolute *Will* and *Law* at the dawn of every rebirth of the worlds." (These, of course, are the Creative Powers, the fashioners of man.) "From these proceeds

I. The First Race, the 'Self-Born', the astral shadows of their progenitors. The body was devoid of all understanding (that is, mind, intelligence, and will). The inner being (the Monad), though within the earthly frame, was unconnected with it. The link was not there as yet.

From the First Race emanated the

II. Second, endowed by the preservers and the incarnating gods with the first weak spark of intelligence.

And from this proceeds

III. The Third Race, the Two-fold, or androgyne. As the process of evolution went on, and matter became more and more dense, the Third Race separated itself into three distince divisions, according to its methods of reproduction. From being entirely without sex, it became androgynous, and having gone through the earliest stages of propagation by fission and by budding, in the Third (or egg-born) Race, the soft cell gradually turned into a man-bearing egg. These beings began to give birth, gradually and almost imperceptibly in their evolutionary development, first to beings in which one sex predominated, and then to distinct males and females. While the earlier Races were little higher than the sea-anemone in development, with the Third Race, and its increase in materiality, came many changes of form, and towards its end, men came into the world under the same conditions and by the same processes as at present. This change required of course many millions of years, and followed the general lines of evolution very closely.

With the separation of the sexes, strife came into the world, and the conflict of natures bred passion and sin and death, for as some of our naturalists have said, reproduction has death as its inevitable consequence, "it is the price paid for a body." This is the real fall of man, "the descent of the soul into matter," and involution, or the union of the spiritual with the physical having been effected, *evolution* or the return towards the spiritual began.

The Third Race shows three distinct divisions: physiologically and psychically; the earliest sinless; the second, awakening to intelligence; and the third and last decidedly *animal,* where the *mind* succumbs to the temptations of desire. The brain had continued to develop, until it had at last become a fitting vehicle for Mind, and the divine spark having kindled the fire of intelligence in man, he acquired the consciousness of his own powers, and ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. That is, having been given *mind, self-consciousness* had arisen from its union with matter, and man had become as a god, knowing good and evil. Good and evil, light and darkness, heat and cold, male and female, active and passive, etc., etc., are the two scales of the ever-vibrating balance of creation. Therefore evil *must* be relative, and only through constant struggle can man work out his salvation, and win his way back to the Divine Source of all.

IV. With the Fourth Race developed language, and the men of its

early sub-divisions are described as being of gigantic stature, and endowed with extraordinary faculties. From the men of this Race we get our traditions of Titans and Cyclopes, the three-eyed, the third eye being however, at the back of the head. The old *Commentary* says that when after the separation of the sexes men had fallen into matter, and their spiritual vision had become dim, it had to be awakened by artificial stimuli, and the third eye gradually disappeared. But it has left a trace of its existence in the *pineal gland,* which Descartes called the seat of the soul. It was an active organ in man at that stage of evolution when the spiritual element reigned supreme, and it did not become entirely atrophied till the close of the Fourth Race, when man's divine powers had been made the servants of his newly awakened physical and psychic passions instead of the reverse. The sin lay, not in using these powers, but in *mis-using* them.

The first civilisation of our Round (the Fourth) began with the Third Race, of which a few remnants are now to be found among the flatheaded Australians. With the Atlanteans, physical beauty and strength reached their climax (in accordance with the law of evolution), towards their middle period. They represented an almost countless number of races and nations, and at their best, Greek, Roman, and even Egyptian civilizations, were as nothing compared to theirs. Their knowledge of the hidden powers of nature was far greater than ours, they built and navigated flying machines, and their houses were floored with gold. But little of their literature is now preserved, and their art and science have left scarcely any vestige except in China, although one of the principal astronomical works in Sanskrit is the production of an Atlantean astronomer.

It was the abuse of their knowledge of the subtler forces of nature which led to the downfall of the Atlantean Race. And as in any series of seven the fourth must be the central or point of equilibrium, so with the Fourth Race the spiritual element had become most deeply imbedded in matter, and with the

V. Fifth the re-ascent towards the spiritual begins. Only by the *union* with matter can Universal Consciousness become individual Mind, only by the *purification* of matter can it regain the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. With each Race, we are told, a new sense and a new element come to perfection, and already the fifth element, Ether, is beginning to be recognized. Prof. Crookes has said that in its vibrations hardly understood as yet, "lie possibilities of a new organ in the human brain answering to these vibrations as the eye answers to the vibrations which we know as light." And so the way is being prepared for the development of that *sixth sense* which will be the distinguishing characteristic of the coming (Sixth) Race.

After the destruction of Atlantis, the Fifth Race "was ruled over by the first divine Kings * * * who re-descended, who made peace

with the Fifth, who taught and instructed it." "When mortals shall have become sufficiently spiritualised, men will *Know* that there never was a great world-reformer, whose name has come down to us, who was not a direct emanation of the *Logos,* and who had not appeared before, during the past cycle." Each of these, and many others, had first appeared on earth as one of the seven Powers of the Logos, individualised as a God or angelic messenger, then, more material in form, they reappeared in turn as the great sages and teachers of the Fifth Race, and finally sacrificed themselves for the good of mankind, to be re-born under different circumstances at various critical periods."

IV

The Seven Principles of Man

So far we have seen the evolution of man to be conducted on three lines, the physical, the mental, and the spiritual, but the closer we look into this marvellous system the more we realise that many problems present themselves that can only be solved by a more minute division, and the doctrine of "the seven principles" seems to be the Key that opens many locks. These seven principles, to begin with the lowest, or the most material, and therefore the best known to us, are (1) The physical body; (2) The astral body; (3) Vitality, or the Life-Force; (4) The passionate or emotional nature, the lower mind; (5) the higher mind, or the intellectual nature; (6) the spiritual nature; and (7) that Ray of the Divine that overshadows man, rather than forms a part of him.. Or instead of speaking of the emotional nature, etc., we may say the animal Soul, the intellectual Soul, and the Spiritual Soul, but the other classification is perhaps simpler.

I. To begin with the physical body, the most material of the component parts of man: This outermost "sheath" as the Oriental philosophers call it, is built up of countless cells, or "Lives," under the constructive energy of the Life-Force, the third principle. These cells have a consciousness of their own, entirely apart from the brain-consciousness, which enables them to select from the nourishment provided them, that which suits their needs, and reject that which would be injurious. Another phase of this cell-consciousness is shown in the way the cells hasten to repair wounded tissue in any part of the body. The brain-consciousness feels the *pain* of a wound, but has nothing to do with the action of the cells in repairing the damage. The memory, which is a function of the brain, urges the cells to repeat the repairing process even when it is no longer needed, and this is the cause of scars and other things of like nature."

When the body dies, it is because the life-force is withdrawn from it, and the energy expended in building it up is changed into the energy which tears it to pieces. Wherever there is an atom of matter, even in

the most gaseous condition, there is life, however latent and unconscious that life may be. The expression "inorganic substance" means simply that the latent life in the molecules of so-called inert matter cannot be detected by our senses. The *Commentary* says that "the worlds to the profane are built up of the known elements. Fire alone is *One* on the plane of the One Reality; on that of manifested, hence illusive, being, its particles are "fiery lives," which live and have their being at the expense of every other life that they consume. Therefore they are called the "Devourers." The preservation and destruction of the physical body are due to the alternate functions of the "fiery lives" as builders and destroyers. They are "builders" by sacrificing themselves in the form of vitality to restrain the destructive influence of the microbes, and compelling them under that restraint, to build up the material body and its cells. They are "destroyers" when that restraint is removed, and the microbes, unsupplied with vital constructive energy, are left to run riot as destructive agents. During the first half of a man's life the fiery lives are indirectly engaged in building up the material body; life is on the ascending scale, and its force is used in construction and increase. After thirty-five, the age of retrogression sets in, and the fiery lives having exhausted their strength, the work of decrease and destruction begins.

But it must not be forgotten that there is in reality a principle more material than the physical body, or even the astral, and that is the fourth principle, the animal soul, the body of desires, as it has been called, the real animal centre through which the beast in us acts all its life, and of which the body is but the irresponsible shell and medium.

II. The second principle is the astral body, the framework upon which the physical body is built, and which is still molecular, though of a finer grade of matter than the physical body. The evolution of the *external* form round the *astral* is produced by the terrestrial forces, but the evolution of the *internal* or real *Man* is purely spiritual. The stories of perfected men, like Enoch and Elijah who are taken up to heaven alive, symbolise the death of any spiritual man who has reached the power and degree, as also the purification, which enable him to die only in the physical body, and *still live consciously in his astral body.* The Pauline expression that "Enoch should not see death," has thus an esoteric meaning, but has nothing supernatural in it. The Biblical hints that Enoch will share with Christ and Elijah the glories of the last Advent, signify, *esoterically,* that some of these perfected men will return in the Seventh Race.

Theosophists will remember that during a period of cyclic rest, which answers to our nightly slumbers, everything visible and invisible remains in *statu quo.* All forms, as well as their astral types, remain as they were when the great clock of the Universe stopped. With the beginning of a new cycle the Monad has only to step into the astral body of the "lunar ancestors" in order that the work of physical consolidation

should begin around the shadowy model. For there can be no *objective form* in all the universe, without its astral prototype being first formed in Space. From Phidias down to his humblest workman, a sculptor has to create a model in his mind before he can reproduce it in a figure, the most trivial thing that can be fashioned by the hand of man, must first exist in the mind of the artificer.

The astral body *inheres* in the physical body, and "to project the astral" means to disentangle every particle of the astral molecules that form it from the physical molecules, a most difficult and complicated performance, needing the knowledge and skill of an adept to complete successfully. Only in occasional cases, the astral and the physical bodies are both so loosely built, that the astral can slip out of its sheath, as can be seen sometimes in seances, when the astral body appears to ooze out of the *left* side of the medium, the spleen, which has been called the factory of astral matter, being on the left side. The astral body dies with the physical, or very soon afterwards, and one of the strongest arguments for cremation is, that by hastening the dispersion of the molecules, the higher principles are the sooner set free from the bonds of matter.

III. The third principle is "Life," or Vitality, which pervades all the rest, as indeed do all the principles, nor can any one of them be thought of as a separate compartment, as it were, of man's nature, while all of them are but a portion of the Universal Soul in whom we live and move and have our being. The principles of man correspond to the principles of the Universe, and so the Life of the universe is the "Spirit" of Electricity, we are told, "as an abstraction we call it the One Life; as an evident reality we speak of a septenary scale of manifestation, which begins at the top with the Unknowable, and ends as omnipresent Mind and Life, immanent in every atom of matter." It is the action of the vital force upon a compound or even a simple body that produces life. "When a body dies, it passes into the same polarity as its male energy, and repels therefore the active agent, which losing hold of the *whole,* fastens on the parts or molecules, this action being called chemical." (*Secret Doctrine, I.* 526, *note.*)

IV. The fourth principle is the emotional nature or Desire, which must be carefully distinguished from Thought. In its lowest aspect, it is the emotional and passionate nature, the part of consciousness which is common to man and the animal; in its highest, it is aspiration, the motive power of the soul. It is this distinction between the consciousness of the animal and the *self*-consciousness of man, that solves so many of the problems of the psychologist as to the reason or instinct of animals. Romanes has shown that they have all the passions of men, and that they possess the reasoning faculty to a large extent, cannot be denied by any careful observer. What then is the difference? Simply that the animals have not what is called "the I am I" consciousness, that

self-consciousness which enables mankind to develop the inner man, and to become the Higher Ego, the immortal Spirit, or the Higher Mind.

Perhaps the nearest approach to self-consciousness in the beast is the sense of ownership which many of the higher animals possess, but even this strong sense of individual property is hardly to be called self-consciousness. In the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* there are some very clear explanations of the true dividing line between man and beast, and even more in the second volume of the *Secret Doctrine*. "Man is a perfected animal," says the former, "the vehicle of a fully developed *Monad, self-conscious* and deliberately following its own line of progress, whereas in the insect, and even the higher animals, the Higher Triad of principles (the overshadowing Divinity, the Intellectual Soul, and the Spiritual Soul), is absolutely dormant." And the *Secret Doctrine* (II, 267) says: "No animal has the three higher principles awakened in him; they are simply potential, latent, and thus non-existent." Therefore, "between man and the animal there is the impassable abyss of mentality and Self-consciousness." And yet we must not forget that "in relation to *its own plane* of conception and perception, the ant has as good an intellect as ours, and over and above instinct, shows very high reasoning powers." (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, I, 13.)

But the three higher principles that go to make up man's complex nature, the Intellectual Soul and the Spiritual Soul, with the overshadowing Divinity, *can have no individuality on Earth,* cannot be *man,* that is, unless there is (1) the Mind, the Ego, to cognise itself, and (2) the terrestrial *false* personality, or the body of personal desires and will, to cement the whole to the physical form of man. It is the Mind and the body of desires and passions that contain the dual personality; the real immortal Ego (or the individuality) and the false and transitory *personality,* the two having to be closely blended to make up a *full* terrestrial existence. "The most perfect soul incarnated in the most perfect physical body, would be only a beautiful and unconscious being without Mind." (*Abridgment,* 395.)

V. It is then very evident that the most important principle of our nature is the fifth, the Mind, the pivot upon which all the other faculties turn, and which is the foundation of our immortality. It is the close and intimate union of the Mind or the Intellectual Soul, with the Spiritual Soul, that forms that immortal Ego that persists forever. Consciousness, that which beholds itself in the mirror of thought, is all that we can feel secure of in the beginning. "I think, therefore I am," said Descartes. "I am, therefore I think," is equally true, and it is the Thinker within us that spells out by slow degrees the complex characters of itself and its surroundings, and learns at last to discern the important from the unimportant.

VI, VII. But higher even than Mind, because nearer akin to Spirit, is the sixth principle, the Spiritual Soul; *Intuition* as opposed to *Under-*

standing, and the seventh principle, which is its vehicle and can hardly be treated of separately. "The Spiritual Soul (the sixth principle), is but a mirror that *reflects* absolute bliss, a reflection not yet free from ignorance; the Supreme Spirit (the seventh principle), alone, is the one real and eternal substratum of all—the essence and absolute knowledge." (*Abridgment,* 269.)

But it is better to leave the lofty speculations of philosophy for the present, and busy ourselves with matters more closely concerned with our everyday problems.

K. HILLARD.

(*To be continued*)

"A little thought will show you how vastly your own happiness depends on the way other people bear themselves towards you. The looks and tones at your breakfast table, the conduct of your fellow-workers or employers, the faithful or unreliable men you deal with, what people say to you on the street, the way your cook and housemaid do their work, the letters you get, the friends or foes you meet,—these things make up very much of the pleasure or misery of your day. Turn the idea around and remember that just so much are you adding to the pleasure or the misery of other people's days. And this is the half of the matter which you can control. Whether any particular day shall bring to you more of happiness or of suffering is largely beyond your power to determine. Whether each day of your life shall give *happiness or suffering rests with yourself."* GEORGE S. MERRIAM.

ON THE SCREEN OF TIME

Theosophy and the Great Religions

"THE relation of Theosophy to the great religions, and particularly to Christianity, is a subject I wish greatly that you would bring into the next *Screen,*" said the Philosopher. "Most absurd misunderstandings are current, even among some members of the Society."

The Recorder professed complete ignorance. Would not the Philosopher explain?

"I am tired of explaining," he responded. "It is so simple, and it seems to me always that people whose misunderstandings persist, must close their ears deliberately. Yet perhaps that is not fair: perhaps preconception and prejudice will account for it, as they account for so many other stupidities. Here is a man who calls himself a Theosophist, actually abusing Christianity. And he is not insane in any ordinary sense. Tell him that Theosophy *is* Christianity, and he froths at the mouth. Add for his consolation that Theosophy is also Buddhism and any other religion which he prefers, and instead of enlightening him, he thinks you are trying to trick him into your heresy. He hurls at you a host of crimes perpetrated in the name of Christianity—as if crimes had any more to do with it than the quarrels or misbehaviour of so-called Theosophists can affect the character of Divine Wisdom! Then he talks about priest-craft, ignoring the fact that Brahmanism has developed a system of priest-craft which puts Rome hopelessly to shame, and that he thinks none the worse of the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* or of the *Upanishads* on that account. Point out such discrepancies, drive him into a corner, and I have known him as a last resort to argue with Nietzsche that Christ taught obedience, and that obedience makes slaves, while Theosophy makes men. As if Theosophy, which is a practical working principle, were not based upon obedience, and as if the chief difference between a man and a child does not lie in the ability of the man and the inability of the child, faithfully and intelligently to obey someone or something which he recognizes as superior in wisdom to himself—his own flickering conscience to begin with!

The Student carried the argument a step further. "Suppose," he said, "that we were compelled to live and to work in Burmah among the Burmese: should we try to convert them to Christianity? Should we attack Buddhism and denounce Gautama Buddha? Is that the way in which members of the Theosophical Society should set to work to help the people of that country and of that religion? Of course, membership in this Society does not necessarily cure a man of bigotry, although it

ought to do so: it gives him endless opportunity. Consequently there may be members who would violate the laws of common-sense and of good taste by conduct affirmative of my questions. This would prove that they do not understand even the elements of Theosophy, though they may have been members of the Society for years, and may have read every book and magazine ever published on the subject. . . . All of which is clear, and all of which would meet with the approval of those who, in this country and among Christians, see fit to attack that small fragment of Christianity which their narrowness permits them to see. Their position is not consistent, and that is because they have no understanding of the fundamental principles of Theosophy upon which their procedure in either case ought to be based. Of course there are evils in Buddhism, in Hinduism, in Christianity: there are evils everywhere and in all people. But faults are the distorted reflections of virtues, and the best way to eradicate faults is to concentrate attention upon their substance—that is, upon the good qualities, upon the truth and beauty and power of that which the faults perversely represent.

"At one stage—whether the field of our endeavor be a garden, a character, or a religion—there is destructive work to be done: overgrowth to be cut down, weeds to be torn up, accretions of all kinds to be removed. But that work, though of vital importance, is preparatory. It was done in this country years ago by Robert Ingersoll, whose work was negative; and by Madame Blavatsky with marvellous success, because she attacked all views that were hide-bound—hard-shell science, hard-shell Spiritualism, hard-shell religion, with large impartiality; and because, while 'breaking the moulds of minds,' she knew how to inject the seed of construction which, as she was well aware, would come to fruition under the fostering care of her successors. Her work, therefore, though often destructive in form, was at all times creative in effect, and was intended by those whose agent she was to prepare the way for the purely constructive methods of to-day. It is our part to reap the fruit of her sowing. If we were to insist upon tearing up just because she did so, we should undo her good work—not aid it."

"To use another simile," added the Philosopher, "you may have to begin the capture of a city by bombarding its walls; but once you have captured the city, or any part of it, your effort is to preserve and to govern—to work from within outwardly, instead of from without towards the centre. Adaptability is one of the first requisites in war, in business, and in Occultism; and one of the troubles with the people of whom you have been speaking is that they have not moved forward with the procession: they are out of date, and they imagine that because they seek to reproduce the work of twenty or thirty years ago, they are the only survivors of the original movement. . . . Well, it is a pity. But I do not see that anything can be done for them. Their minds are shut. And certainly the clock of the universe cannot be put back to

please them. Theosophy means more than they know. They pay the penalty of limiting its significance."

"But there is still another phase of it which ought to be referred to" —it was the Disciple who spoke now—"and which has not been mentioned as yet. I mean that the test of Theosophy is a life, not a doctrine. We cannot reform people; we cannot help them in the least, except in so far as our own lives are the outcome of self-reformation. No man can rule who has not learned to obey. No man can afford to talk who has not learned to keep silent. No man can give light to another whose heart is not illumined. His head may be full of words and of logic, and yet he will be no better than sounding brass. Others may think that he helps them; they may say that he does: but "by their fruits ye shall know them," and the test to-day as ever is, how much more is there of patience, of gentleness, of dignity, of self-control, of quietude, of joy, of kindliness, of fire, of courage, of sagacity, of endurance, of devotion, of vigour, of consideration for others, of fidelity, of humility, and of those other qualities which go to the making of real men and of true women? Relatively speaking, so long as that basic fact be included, the nature of the doctrine will matter very little; and it will in any case be possible so to phrase the other clauses of our belief that people will understand them as an explanation and extension of their own. Membership in a Society, acceptance and declaration of certain beliefs, does not make a man a Theosophist. To be a Theosophist is to live a theosophical life, which means an ideal life. To be a Christian, in the real sense, can mean no less. Neither Christ nor Buddha asked people to adopt some intellectual formula, some new explanation of the universe, or to join a church. Both of them, in language which their hearers could understand, said, 'Follow me. I have found the Way. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Live as I live. Obey as I obey. Become what I have become. Be what I am. Love is life.' Egotists call that egotism. Humility understands, and adores such self-abnegation. . . . It is folly to say that the imitation of Buddha will not make a man a Theosophist. It will. And by the imitation of Buddha, he will in time discover Christ. It is folly as great, or greater for western people, to say that the imitation of Christ will not make a man a Theosophist. It will. It does. And, by the imitation of Christ, he will in time discover Buddha. The man who refuses to follow is following himself. His end will be destruction, and, if his vanity be positive enough, he will lead others with him. . . . But can it be that anyone of this day and generation claims seriously to know more about the spiritual life than Christ knew and knows? It were well, in that case, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest such a book as Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine,* as an experience provocative of humility, and then to remember that Madame Blavatsky spoke and wrote of Christ as an Avatar—as the embodiment of wisdom and love and power."

"Here are a few quotations from the writings of Madame Blavatsky," said the Orientalist at this point, "which I copied out a few days ago, and which are fortunately appropriate. For instance she says: 'And now once more we have to beg the reader not to lend an ear to the charge—against Theosophy in general and the writer in particular—of disrespect toward one of the greatest and noblest characters in the history of Adeptship—Jesus of Nazareth—nor even of hatred to the Church.' Elsewhere she says: 'And this . . . shows Him, beyond any doubt, as an Initiate of the Egyptian Mysteries.' Again: 'Those great characters who tower like giants in the history of mankind, like Siddhartha Buddha and Jesus,' the one 'as noble and as loving' as the other. But no one who knew Madame Blavatsky or Mr. Judge personally, can doubt the veneration in which they held Christ as Avatar and Jesus as Adept."

The Wanderer had joined our party before the Orientalist had begun to speak. From where he came, no one knew and no one asked. We have learned better than to ask him personal questions. He had over-heard the last of what the Disciple had been saying, and he is quick to draw inferences.

"Obedience is the thorn that pricks in this case," he said. "But their resentment is due often to lack of understanding. They hate priestcraft, and they are right. They are wrong, however, when then confuse that with obedience. The two things are poles apart. They are right when they demand force and individuality. They are wrong when they forget that the force of Niagara itself must be harnessed and concentrated before it can be transformed from mere noise into utility. Objections to obedience always are voiced loudly. Power is quiet. The worship of the Higher Self will lead to liberation. It is one of the paths. But, as Krishna says in the *Gîtâ,* it is a path of great difficulty, and many a man who has followed it, owing to his immersion in a self less high than the highest, and owing to his mistaken view of impersonality, has failed to find the intermediate link, the person, the teacher, the one who has gone before, who would have saved him from destruction. No matter what path is followed, a teacher is needed. The moment a path is entered, a teacher stands ready. We may recognize him or not: but he is there and should be sought and, being found, should be obeyed.

"There is this further truth, however: no one can recognize his teacher—not though he talks with him daily—until he has recognized the voice of his own conscience. No one can obey his teacher until he has learned first to obey his own conscience unflinchingly. Obedience, therefore, begins most simply with the effort to do what we know to be right. And against that obedience, no one, theoretically, rebels. Those who rebel against an extension of that principle and who declare that they would never obey a person; those who go further than that and who condemn the teaching of Christ because of his insistence upon obedience to himself, are the people who, through lack of obedience to the

highest they have seen, have not experienced its value: and no one can appreciate a quality who has not at least the beginning of that quality in himself, and who has not tried to manifest it.

"The fact is that obedience, like love and gratitude and all other virtues, has to be acquired. We have to learn to obey. Destined to govern all things—to bring 'all things in subjection under our feet'—we have first to bring our personal wills into subjection to Wisdom, and to wisdom as embodied in some Master of Wisdom. This is merely another way of saying that we have to learn self-control: that the lower self must be brought into subjection to the higher Self—not killed, but dominated. And do you realize how many different kinds of activities, in the ordinary person, take place without so much as his recognition of them? Naturally, he has no control where he has no recognition. But take some obvious instance, such as self-control in matters of speech: are there many people who can say that their tongues are completely and permanently bridled? Dare they claim to be masters of their speech—or even of their written words? Most people talk before they think, which is more dangerous than to leap before looking. Will not 'a single word put the spirit of a lion into a dead fox,' and is not death as well as life 'in the power of the tongue'?

"Obedience to the will of the highest in the matter of speech, unbroken recollection of that duty, will enable the student in time to govern his thoughts and his feelings—to bring them also into a state of subjection. And until he has done that, he is not free: he is a slave. He has learned, presumably, not to squander his money (our present civilization exists very largely for the purpose of teaching him self-control and obedience there). He must learn not to squander his time, his words, his thoughts. He must include as part of his rule of life this saying: *the unnecessary is the immoral.*

"One result of such discipline will be a tightening of the fibre; a greater intensity in action. He will, at least to some extent, be able to throw the force of his entire nature into whatever it may be his duty to undertake. If he speaks, if he bargains, if he fights, if he meditates, if he prays, he will do it with power. His obedience will give him dominion."

The Student asked a question: "Is it not helpful to concentrate the mind upon the duty of the moment, and to make a practice of living from moment to moment—treating the past as a back number, stale and unprofitable, and the future as none of our concern? Many people brood so over the past and worry so over the future, that they seem to me to fritter their energies and to reduce their working capacity by one half."

"Cavé" was with us and answered. "To brood, to worry—that must always be wrong. To throw our full force into the performance of the moment's duty must always be right. But the duty of some moments must be to reflect; and although, when people are inclined to

be morbid, it may be necessary, as a temporary remedy, to advise them to turn their minds away from the past, and to live only in the present, there can be no question that those who wish to become disciples must learn to live *continuously*. After all, your past is a living fact—not dead at all, but part and parcel of what you are to-day, no matter how much you may have changed, developed, turned from it. It defines, limits, modifies your present, and will continue so to do in your future, until the causes there generated are worked out. Rightly to understand and to manipulate your present and future, therefore, you *must* understand your past: and to understand it you must reflect upon it; you must study it with the utmost care, both as a storehouse of causes, perpetually moulding and determining things to-day, and as lessons whose full value and significance should not be lost in the slightest detail. Otherwise you are working in the dark, unaware of danger, unprepared for difficulties, every one of which it is possible to change and often to eliminate, though only when taken intelligently in hand, never when ignored.

"The disciple does not live in the present; he lives in the Eternal, which includes past, present, and future, as one: and he learns to regard them, and his life, therefore, in the essential spirit of unity. . . . You cannot divorce yourself from your past: if you try to do so, it will become as a ghost to hound and hinder you at every turn. You must face it, study it, take possession of it, master it, learn from it, profit by it, and make it serve as means to your ends. If you do not possess and dominate it, it will possess and dominate you. You have created it, putting your own life and power into it: only you can destroy that in it which should be destroyed. And without the force it contains, you will be crippled hopelessly in your work.

"To work without your past is to cut yourself off from one of your bases of supply, which are two—the spiritual world on the one hand, and, on the other, that mass of generated force of a personal kind which is sometimes called a man's Karma. . . . The past holds the key to each man's present, and without that key he cannot understand his present. To live in any other way is to drift; is to live in a third of oneself instead of in the whole ('regard the three truths, they are equal') is to live, not even in time, but in only a portion of time, instead of in Eternity."

The Holy Court

At our next meeting, the Philosopher commenced at once. "That the Master's kingdom may come; that his will may be done on earth as it is done already in heaven:—a great prayer!" he said; "a prayer which Christ himself said on the cross, and which we should learn to say with him, as he then said it, so as to add to our own power the tremendous volume of his.

"For what else are we working, if not for the Father's reign on

earth: for the restoration of the Adept kings who, before men deserted them for evil, ruled the world in peace? The Age of Gold, though of the past, is also of the future, as the cycles return upon themselves, and as innocence, lost in sin, becomes converted, by the fires of love and suffering, into purity. . . . So the Father of Adepts will yet reign on earth, though first his children, to prepare the way for him—that men be not blinded by his glory; and before them even, there must come those who will rule in *his* name, for love of him, with understanding of the Lodge, and with delegated power. Not so far off, though not in your life-time or in mine, is that day of conscious effort, when a Court, nobler than Arthur's, will take a Master as its unseen King, and when royalty will strive to serve him as his messengers and representatives,—guided by him, let us hope, as Teresa and many another was guided knowingly by Christ.

"A gloomy Court, you say" (the Objector had commented, and the Philosopher turned to him in reply). "Dear man, why so pessimistic? And besides, as I have mentioned Saint Teresa, was she gloomy? Only a few minutes ago I was reading a sketch of her, by a Protestant, who says:

'This gracious, aristocratic Castilian, who receives with high-bred courtesy such visitors as may chance to call,—this charming lady of brilliantly witty conversation, *au fait* with all manner of current topics, a letter-writer who has never been excelled,—this marvel of contagious merriment, who keeps her fellow-nuns in constant amusement if not shaking with laughter, breaks every rule for saintship that has been consecreted by time and by tradition.' One of the greatest of the saints, both in spiritual and in worldly attainment (you remember Crashaw's wonderful poem), she was a 'marvel of contagious merriment.' With someone like her to inspire a Court, it would become the gayest in all Europe; and it would be gay, not in spite of but because of its ideals."

The Student has just returned from Europe. The Philosopher had interested him. "What you have been saying reminds me," he remarked, "of criticism of the Queen of Holland which has appeared recently in certain Dutch newspapers, significant only because these newspapers are conservative and in all ways devoted to the interests of the throne. They complain that the Queen is becoming 'too religious': that she rarely attends the theatres, and, when she does, seems to make a point of arriving very late and of leaving long before the end; that she is inclined to display her dislike of music, while the Dutch are a nation of music-lovers; that she appears to be morose, and that she leads a life of such seclusion that her people feel themselves entirely out of touch with her. Such criticism is personal and could not be referred to in the QUARTERLY were it not for the fact that the Queen's warmest friends are responsible for it, and that they have made the extraordinary mistake of attributing her shortcomings, whether real or imaginary, to her growing interest in

religion. The Queen of Holland is, of course, a Calvinist; and Calvinism has the reputation of being 'dour.' But I doubt, even, whether a proper understanding of Calvin would warrant behaviour so unfortunate in a Queen as that alleged against Her Majesty of Holland. What a hideous perversion of Christianity! Surely, if any Master were consulted—if Christ himself were able to prescribe—he would say that a Queen's first duty is to love her subjects and to charm them by constant evidence of her love. How else would he himself reign over us! The love of God, if it be real, must express itself in love of our neighbour; and for a Queen, with the eyes of the world upon her, there can be no higher form of 'yoga' or of prayer than to sit through a concert which bores her, with all the appearance of deep interest and appreciation. Nor is it as foolish as may seem, for us to discuss the duties of a Queen: is there any woman living who may not and should not be the Queen of her own kingdom? Four bare walls may contain it, but the fact of her womanhood makes her royal, if she understands what womanhood means. She does not need to assert it—only to be it; and her sweetness and purity, her consideration for others, her loving heart, her gracious dignity, will bring every man, who is a man, to his knees. What woman is there who, many times a day, in nursery or in kitchen, with brothers or with friends, is not called upon to practise just that kind of 'yoga' which I have suggested for the benefit of Queens! And what does it mean but self-surrender, as opposed to self-indulgence—the subordination of personal will and preference for the happiness and encouragement of others." T.

"If instead of a germ, or even of a flower, we could cast the gift of a lovely thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels, I suppose, must give." GEORGE MACDONALD.

ELEMENTARY ARTICLE

Theosophy and Some Dark Problems

THAT there are some dark problems in life I think no one will deny, and they sometimes seem so insoluble that we are brought to the edge of despair. Millions of hearts desired to know

> "By what power without our own consent,
> Caught us in the snare of life we know not how,
> We are placed here to suffer and to sin,
> To be in misery and we know not why."

None of our modern philosophies has solved the great problems of life. We may freely admit that these philosophies throw some light on the perplexing questions of life and so give us some comfort and help. One of the dark questions most frequently asked us is: why are a few people born to wealth and luxury, while the masses are born to poverty and toil? If we look back over history we may see the greed and crimes of the strong, the torture and sorrow of the innocent and weak; and all through the centuries there seems to be a fearful waste of martyrs' blood. Think of the great and noble and good, the world's greatest benefactors, who for trying to bless their fellow-men have received stripes and imprisonments, scorn and persecution, crowns of thorns and crucifixion. Think of the cares, the tears, and the sorrows that so often come to the mother in return for her love and service. All around us are living martyrdoms. Here a sweet and virtuous woman marries a sober and industrious man, but after a few years he falls into bad habits and sinks lower and lower until he becomes a drunken brute, making her life one long agony. Here in another home is a bright and lovely child, the joy of father and mother. This child is apparently healthy until he is seven years old; then a painful disease attacks him and the parents watch the progress of this lingering disease, knowing what the end will be and dreading it, suffering slow torture for three weary years; then they are left childless, with heart wounds that are never healed on earth.

Read a book like *Twenty Years at Hull House,* by Jane Addams, where the life and experience of the squalid districts of a great city are vividly painted. There are innocent children suffering terribly for the idleness, sin and crime of their parents. Born in poverty, cradled in dirt, not knowing what kindness is, but often receiving brutal treatment from

those who should love them tenderly. Their passions are allowed to grow strong, while their higher faculties of kindness, love of the beautiful, reverence and truthfulness are left undeveloped. Some come into the world physically weak or diseased, while their health is made even more precarious by early environment, and they seem to have no opportunity for education, or for physical and mental culture. Around Hull House are Italians and Greeks, Russians and Poles, each race despising every other, but all living in ignorance, superstition, poverty and wretchedness. It would be impossible to estimate the good that has been done by this settlement, many in each of these races have been induced to try for better things, to live for new ideals, and hundreds (perhaps thousands) have become good citizens, skillful mechanics, artists and scholars.

But here again a new problem presents itself, and a dark one too. Frequently the most earnest among these people failed because physical vitality failed. Miss Addams gives instances of several of the most successful who fell a prey to consumption, or to some other disease that carried them off. Now why should those who make the bravest attempt to free themselves from their unfavorable surroundings fail? It seems like a great waste of effort and strength, and we are led to ask what is the value to them of the efficiency they won in art and in music? Is it not all lost, all wasted? What answer do philosophers give to these dark questions? Generally they will say: "The laws of nature are uniform and are no respecters of persons, what seems cruel is not really cruel. If through ignorance we break these laws we must suffer, and through our suffering learn wisdom." It is something to be assured that these laws are good and that sometime men may come to understand them and so be freed from much of the pain and suffering they have to endure to-day. But very few will find this a satisfying answer.

What does Theosophy say? That man is a pilgrim (not a tramp) and that in order to reach his destiny—a character perfected in wisdom and love—some struggle will be necessary, for if he is to be a conqueror, he must subdue the flesh by the spirit, the earthly by the heavenly. Throughout this entire pilgrimage he is in the grip of two great laws, the law of Love and the law of Karma. The law of Love binds him to his Eternal Father and to each and all of his brothers. During a part of his pilgrimage he is only at times conscious of this law, groping upward for his Father, yet vigorously fighting his brothers as bitter enemies, as the child in delirium may fight its mother. But in time this groping and struggling open the eyes of the pilgrim so that he comes to recognize his Father and his brethren. To accomplish this great awakening the law of *Karma,* cause and effect, is used. This great law is not fully and clearly expressed in the words, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." There is another phase of Karma that may be called the law of cost, or the law of sacrifice. In this lowest of the three worlds of our pilgrimage everything that is good, viewed from a spiritual stand-

point, must be won, must be paid for. The great law of life that we find perfectly exemplified in the Cross of Jesus flashes its light all along the pathway of human history. Sacrifice is everywhere the law and measure of progress.

All the privileges and opportunities of our twentieth century, have been bought with blood. All the safeguards of our civilization, all our security against storm, pestilence and disease; all the things which mean to us safety, comfort and enjoyment have been won for us by hardship, patience, heroism and sacrifice. Gide, a French professor of Political Economy has shown that every mile of railroad built has cost in its construction at least one human life, and that the operation of every hundred miles costs at least five lives more. That is, the seven hundred thousand miles now in operation cost about thirty thousand lives every year. This is just as true of other great departments of life, as for instance navigation. So, too, liberty of conscience and religious enlightenment have been purchased for us at a tremendous cost. To make them possible, a long procession of faithful, loving souls have not counted dear their lives or the sweet things of life, but have given up ideals of comfort, of culture and ease for our sakes. If we have escaped from the terrors and despairs of former days we owe it to men who were willing to stand alone, to be misunderstood, to sacrifice ease and peace, and to help on the progress of mankind. They laid down their lives in Roman amphitheaters, in the fires of Smithfield, and on the moors and hills of Scotland, and in a thousand other places. But the great law of cause and effect makes it certain that for this sowing in tears there shall be a joyful reaping; and those who have suffered most have assured us that even in the suffering they found great joy.

I know that to-day another doctrine is preached by many. They tell us that there can be no pain unless we make it ourselves by wrong thought; that the great heroes, reformers and saviours need not have suffered at all, but that the liberties of the world, the sanctities of the home, the redemption of society and the triumph of justice could all be won without the shedding of blood, without suffering or tears. They further tell us that sickness and poverty are curable by right thought, that death can be conquered in the same way; and to prove their faith they are now forming leagues of immortality. Thus, they say, we need not bear a cross nor sympathise with suffering at all—we make a mistake if we do. This teaching greatly exaggerates certain truths and entirely ignores certain other truths and facts. It is really telling us that we need not pay our debts, that we need not pay the cost of cleansing the slums or disinfecting the plague spot, that creation need not "groan and travail in pain" as a great seer has said. The experience of the world contradicts all this and has proved beyond a doubt that manhood and womanhood can only be lifted towards their superb possibilities through struggle and trial.

To come back to the cases given by Miss Addams in her book, when those boys and girls struggled for success and then died before reaching it were their brave efforts wasted? By no means. The law of Karma is the law of the conservation of energy. No effort is ever lost, the awakening of the soul to a consciousness of its powers is a long step forward. The culture of their intellectual and æsthetic powers is not lost to these young people although they did not live to use these powers here. Of course if this were the only life on earth it would be different, but Karma demands reincarnation. And in the other world what has been won here will be further perfected, worked up into faculty and made far more available in another incarnation. And further, the struggle to free themselves from their unfavorable environment will also bear fruit and they may be born into more favorable conditions.

The natural world is not an end but a means, and if we feel a sense of defeat it is well; for we must lose the natural in order to gain the spiritual. Theosophy teaches us that "All life exists for the purposes of the Soul, for the making of the spiritual man." It is then in perfect harmony with this great law that these trying experiences come to us to win our thoughts and affections away from the material and the transient, so that we may recognize the spiritual and the permanent. The uncertainties of life and the sufferings we have to endure are well adapted to this end. Physical pain at least arrests our attention, and mental and moral suffering, whether in the form of parental solicitude, business anxieties, or any one of the numberless forms of inward distress to which we are subject, are even more useful in drawing our thoughts and affections from the charms and fascinations of the world, and in dispelling its illusions. Sickness, pain, sorrow, calamity, death, and other sad experiences are so many teachers to set us free from our bondage to the earthly, and to help forward our spiritual development. When these rude teachers have done their work (which is preparatory) we pass into a higher grade of the great school of life, and we come to see that every thought, word, and act of our lives has a spiritual meaning and affects our character. A wise teacher said, "Children here is a beautiful china plate; it is painted with flowers just as charming as they grow. It has been and will be admired by thousands. Every one who observes flowers will be delighted with it. But I did not bring it in on account of its beauty, I brought it to tell you something about its manufacture. First it is painted; then the colors are burnt in. So it is with character; the qualities that make character must be burnt in. That is done by trials and temptations. You mean to be truthful; if you are tempted to lie and resist, you are burning in your truthfulness."

So working, fighting, watching, we are by a strange spiritual alchemy transforming our characters, being changed from glory to glory, until at last all the dark problems are solved and we enter into life eternal.

JOHN SCHOFIELD.

REVIEWS

Psychic Phenomena, Science and Immortality, by HENRY FRANK (Sherman, French & Company, Boston). In this day of specialists, when every branch of science is so minutely subdivided, none but a layman would dare propose to himself so sweeping a review of the ground traversed by modern science. Enthusiasm and faith have carried the author dry-shod over many a spot which to a more logical and scientific mind would have been impassable. But anyone who accepts a certain means of conveyance, whether airship or camel-back, has no call to find fault, *en route,* with the drawbacks incidental to that method of travel. So let us as mannerly travelers set sail with the author.

"Does man live after death?" is the question that shadowed the author's days, until he was driven to seek a complete answer. This answer he sought but could not find in philosophy which, he found "always speculative and uncertain." He turned in vain to religion, knowing none but that partial and incomplete form which he says "is temperamental and but marks the residual tracings of human experience in the institutions of humankind." Finally in his perplexities, he went to Science, "whose mirror, however much betimes distorted, yet images for man the only trustworthy reflection of Nature's mysterious truths." There he found the answer to his question about immortality, both in the pronouncements of men of the highest scientific attainment and in his own application of accredited scientific principles to a range of phenomena that have not as yet engaged the attention of the great body of scientific explorers.

The reader who has not found time to keep abreast of the restless onward march of modern science will find in these pages a reflection of the great work of many great men. The varied quotations from writers on all phases of scientific research show the range of the authors investigations and will prove for many readers the most interesting and valuable feature of the entire book. Those whose certainty of the unity of life, here and hereafter, is established, beyond necessity of argument or support, will still find satisfaction in seeing the swinging searchlight of science thrown ever further forward, till it is now trained upon the confines of psychic and even of spiritual life. This direct touch that the author gives his readers with the conclusions and convictions of a multitude of the best thinkers of the present day—is after all the best service he could render them and it will surely be appreciated by those who may not find equal illumination in the author's own contributions to the discussion of his immense subject. It is more than likely that another class of readers who do not care to follow closely the different steps taken by the authorities so freely quoted may find their satisfaction in the many phenomenal experiences, both personal and otherwise which the author relates and in his own deductions from the facts and interpretations he has gathered. From the start Mr. Frank states clearly the basis of his own contribution. His thesis is always evident. His handling of it is candid and thorough. If he continually makes the bold leap from theorem to conclusion, ignoring the reader's demand for proof, it is only fair to say that his real audience will generally find it easy to make the leap with him, will usually be satisfied to subscribe to the Q. E. D.

with which he closes the discussion. For is it not true that most of us demand rather to *feel convinced* than to be convinced? When an author proposes to the minds of his readers a question that cannot be truly answered by the mind alone it were very unreasonable to find fault with his method if he shifts his ground and appeals to the heart and to the hopes of his followers when an appeal to the intellect will not serve. This shifting of the ground from cold scientific statement to the wider vision of constructive science, and then to aspiration untrammelled by a scientific basis may leave the reader gasping at times but let him cease grumbling and remember that extremes of temperature make for mental as well as for physical robustness.

To do justice to the author's argument, as presented in over five hundred condensed pages would require too much space. His inquiry is divided into three main sections: Book I, Psychic Phenomena; Book II, Scientific Interpretation; Book III, The Problem of Immortality. In this last section the heart of the book is found and that may be partially represented by a few quotations:

An "immaterial emanation of radiant matter flows ceaselessly around the cell centers of the brain, and is the immediate instrumentality of the energy of the will. . . . The will energy, which is the center-force of personality or self-consciousness, is itself radiant substance—that is, a pure immaterial emanation, radio-active, electric and all-penetrative. When this substance is directly manipulated by the sub-conscious mind, or subjective will, it is susceptible to extraordinary manifestations, such as intervention with the laws of gravity, levitation, etc. . . . When it manifests its properties in the intellectual, emotional and reflective realms, then it becomes the instrument of the expressions of genius, of creative art, of oratorical inspiration, and of such phases of personal force as are far beyond the normal capacity of the individual, who becomes its momentary instrument. . . .

"The normal consciousness is the result of the aggregate life of the composite cells of the brain. But there is a consciousness which tends still more to liberate the mind from the aggregate limitations of the united-cell-minds of one's body. . . . It is the consciousness of cosmic or monistic unity. . . . Within the substance of the cell we find the physical groundwork of the spiritual planes of consciousness, or the psychic activities. The outer substance of the cell is the instrument of objective consciousness. . . . Deeper within the cell . . . we find the pure substance, the nucleal plasm that acts as the instrument of the subjective consciousness, the consciousness that relates to pure intellect and formative thought. While, around the cortical cells and all enswathing them, as a golden light, we discover the supēr-substantial, ultra-material, radio-active emanation that constitutes the direct instrument of sentiency, volition and self-consciousness in its supreme state. . . . There reside in the human being, apparently, all the factors essential to the continuity of personal existence after the dissolution of the cellular units of the physical body. All seems to depend on the tenacity of self-consciousness, the strength of the personal will, the potency of the character or the determination of integrated individuality."

To this summary of his argument on scientific grounds, the author adds a "Conclusion" in different vein, which forms the final chapter of the book. There he says:

"The universal consciousness of life, and its constantly inciting activity, is the groundwork of belief in immortality. . . . We realise life; death we can but observe. . . . Are life and death eternal foes or, in fact, perennial allies in the warfare of existence? . . . Who can think of himself as never thinking? How can a living soul conceive the experience of not living? . . . If, indeed, there is a life beyond, we should not halt to learn the law by which it may be attained: nor think that it is our due because we have been forced into existence here. . . .

It may be, as has been intimated in the deductions made from scientific revelations in the preceding pages, that only they shall go into another vital experience who shall prove this right by force of moral fiber, by tenacity of purpose, by virility of personal consciousness."

This clear, bracing atmosphere is befitting the close of a book which represents much research, keen devotion to the truth as the author sees it, and an earnest desire to hold high his torch to light the way of others. T. E. P.

The Golden Rose.—The world is full of surprises, especially the literary world. Who would have dreamed of a book by Amélie Rives, Princess Troubetzkoy which should be built upon extracts from *The Light on the Path, The Voice of the Silence,* the *Bhagavad Gita,* et al? The motto upon the title-page sums up the tragic little story, but even that does not prepare one for all that is to follow in the way of theosophy.

"Absence kindles a great passion and extinguishes a small one," that is the thesis of the book, slightly condensed, and the characters are but four, the young widow Meraud, whose name immediately suggests Maeterlinck, and who has just been freed from a disastrous marriage; her cousin Anice, a semi-invalid and a hunchback; (Meraud has heart-disease). Steven Gordon Trafford, the hero, a commonplace young man who is being continually lifted off his feet in his efforts to keep up with the heroine, and the doctor, that all-wise and big-hearted doctor we have known taking his sapient way through the pages of so many novels. There is a little of the Topsy type of darky, to leaven the lump of mysticism, and permit one of the characters at least to have his foot on the solid earth occasionally. The book begins with a discussion between the cousins upon love, and Meraud declares that love upon this earth leads always to the same end, and it is an *end.* "There is a mighty law that few people seem to know about," says Meraud. "It's the law that fulfilment—on this earth—means death. What people call the fulfilment of love means love's death. . . . Maya! Maya! 'Under every flower is coiled a serpent.'"

The overture having been played, the hero, Steven Gordon Trafford, enters. He announces himself as an historian, he wants to write a history of "that part of Virginia," and of course Meraud can supply him with all the documents his heart could wish. They also find that they have a consciousness of pre-existence, and share all sorts of dreams and fancies. "Do you really believe in reincarnation, and—and—all that?" blurted Trafford. "And do you think that we have all lived before—often—and shall live again—on this earth?" "Until we conquer once for all," she smiled at him; "until we reach the end of that 'ancient, narrow path stretching far away, as hard to tread as the edge of a razor'." And here begins the elevation of the hero, with quotations from Lessing, Walt Whitman, and the *Bhagavad Gita,* particularly the latter. One of the chief reasons that she liked him so much was that he took her exactly as she meant him to take her—in a word, he always "understood",—even when she told him that she had once "slipped out of her body, like an Indian yogi," though this did "startle" him!

Then the Doctor comes, to find Trafford installed at Kingsweather, and his keen eyes soon pierce to the heart of the mystery. "I am afraid," he says to the cousin, "I am afraid—there's not enough to him. Just that," he ended, "not enough to him."

Several quotations from the *Gita* come in after the inevitable declaration from Trafford, followed by extracts from the *Voice of the Silence,* "Shila, the Ray of harmony in word and act; Dana, the golden key of charity and love immortal," followed by bits from Reiny de Gourmont, the Vita Nuova, Paracelsus, Michel-Angelo, and Tennyson. She tells her lover that she can never marry again, and

he professes to be content. Well he might be, as they are described as entering from that night "into a state of being which some great Trouvère might have dreamed of, Gaucelm Faydit, during his long servitude of Marie de Ventadour, or Pierre Vidal, yearning out the sad, vain years in fruitless love of Adalais de Baux." In the next paragraph we get a few bits from Browning, Pico della Mirandola, and Rossetti. The only writer of fiction of this sort to whom the Princess Troubetzkoy can be compared, is the late Mrs. Augusta Evans in her novel of St. Elmo, in which she easily distances all lovers of quotations before or since.

Upon the halcyon atmosphere of a sublimated platonic love, there suddenly breaks in a friend of the hero, demanding the fulfilment of a promise that Trafford should join him in a trip to the Himalayas for which he has already made every preparation. They go, and Meraud lives upon letters, until the terrible time comes, of which she has been forewarned, when there can be no sure posts, and there must be a gap of two or three months in their correspondence. During this time Trafford had been ill, he writes, at last, nothing serious, only his illness seemed to have left him dumb and numb, but when they met all would be well again. Unfortunately, with this resumption of correspondence a deadly chill seems to have come over them, and they meet only to part. "The wonder, the splendor of a great passion had dimmed into the commonplace for him." She had played with the key of "Dana, the golden key of charity and love immortal," but she had opened no locks with it, and now she remembered those words, terrible and piteous as life itself—"Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Master its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart." (*Light on the Path.*)

And the book virtually ends with Emily Brontë's last lines, beginning—

> "No coward soul is mine,
> No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere.
> I see Heaven's glories shine,
> And Faith shines equal, arming me from fear."

The value of such a book as this is above all its testimony to the far-reaching influence of the theosophical ideas in our current literature.

"The Golden Rose" is the ideal love, as contrasted with the "painted apple." The book is exquisitely written, and the impossibility of raising a thoroughly commonplace nature to ideal heights, *and holding it there* is exceedingly well portrayed. K. H.

The Kabala of Numbers, by Sepharial, published by William Rider & Son, Ltd., London.

This belongs to the class of books which deals with astrology, or other recondite speculations of the restless human mind. They are a weariness to the flesh to many, a matter of contemptuous scorn to most, and, curious as it may seem, a delightful interest to a few. To that few this little work can be commended. It is clearly and simply written and does not presuppose too much knowledge of the subject. Sepharial, by the way, was once a well known member of the T. S. G.

True Occultism has recently been published by the Committee of the English members in the penny form which has already made four valuable articles accessible to many who could otherwise ill afford them. It is just what is needed at the present time; a clear statement of the difference between true and false occultism, and a ringing appeal to all of us to follow that higher life which is true occultism. The writer is to be congratulated upon a fine piece of work and the English members upon the successful creation of a most valuable instrument for helpfulness. The

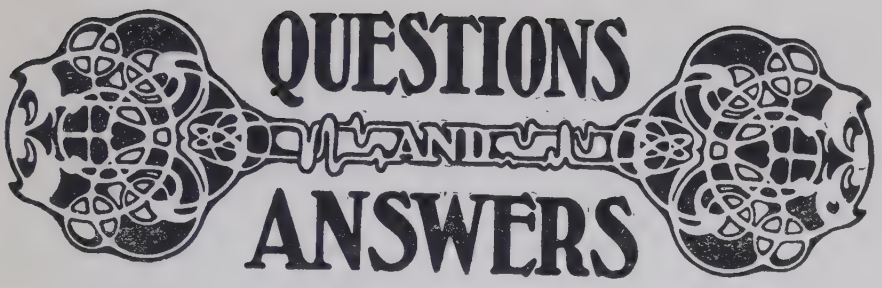
format, paper, and printing are admirable. American members can secure the pamphlet through the Secretary T. S., 159 Warren Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., and abroad from the Corresponding Secretary, 43 Brook Street, London, W.

G.

Death and Resurrection, by Gustaf Björklund (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company).

This is a very remarkable book, by a contemporary philosopher of Sweden. It has conspicuous defects. Its author seems to have no marked literary gift, and his translator has only a very dim idea of the rhythm of a sentence. But despite these obstacles, the book's striking merits remain. Like another Vergil leading Dante through the hidden worlds, this good Swede leads us, by devious ways, involving the mysteries of cell-life, and brings us forth at last into the clear sunlight of mysticism. He perceives with piercing vision the reality of the divine world, the existence of the spiritual body, the ultimate unity of man with God. He writes with astonishing wisdom and profundity concerning the invisible world, the relation between time and eternity; the entry into immortal life; and, at the same time, he genuinely believes that all his conclusions flow by inevitable steps from certain discoveries and theories of cell-life. Perhaps they do, as the universe throughout is one and undivided. But we are inclined to believe that his conclusions came first, and that his reasonings were hammered out to fit the conclusions. At any rate, the conclusions are full of spirituality and truth, and we look back to our reading of this book with satisfaction, even though at times it was a somewhat irritating task. Some things the author has expressed admirably well; better, perhaps, than they have ever been expressed in a Western tongue.

C. J.



QUESTION 130 (*Continued*).—*Does not the theosophical philosophy contradict the modern theories about the rights of man?*

ANSWER.—The four answers to this question in the last issue of the QUARTERLY interested me greatly. They seemed flatly contradictory, and yet I doubt if the writers differ as much in principle as in their use of terms. "Rights" is a word which this generation is using much and loosely. A few centuries ago the Rights of Man meant liberty, toleration, the rights of the soul. To-day the Rights of Man mean, in general, material rights, rights of the personality, a very different proposition. The answer to the question depends on how far back "modern theories" are meant to go. Do they go to the days of "the easy rhetoric of the Preamble to the American Constitution," when, for the establishment among men of such rights of the soul as it proclaimed, brave men gladly sacrificed every "right" of the personality, even the life of the personality itself? Or does it mean the "rights" we hear more of now, the "right" to a living wage or to eight hours recreation?

"Rights" is a relative term used to indicate a certain moral relationship between beings. For the word to have any meaning it must involve two parties, the possessor of the "right" and those in relation to whom it is possessed. Obviously the "right" will change with a change in the relationship. To use a trivial illustration, if we pay for it, we have a "right" to occupy a seat at a base-ball game so far as the management is concerned, but that "right" disappears as against the employer to whom we may have sold our time. An inferior "right" must cease to exist in the face of a superior one.

In general, "rights" so-called may be roughly divided into two classes—our claim on moral grounds first, to certain immunities from interference by others, and second, that certain positive acts shall be done by others as our due. Such claims as that to a living wage are of the second class, those to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness of the first. Relationships between beings and right or wrong action therein being inevitable, men's "rights" are as inherent as good and evil. They are also as relative and as subject to change at different periods of development. With the inherent right of man to free will the Masters themselves will never interfere, much as we may sometimes wish that in our case They would. The right to believe what we will and to be accorded toleration in that belief by others no Theosophist will deny. These are rights of the soul. Ultimately, as H. B. M. says, all rights are rights of the soul. The personality is "that thing which he (the soul) has with pain created for his own use and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality." This "thing" has no rights against its creator and "in the denial of the rights of the personality" (as against the soul) "the right of the soul is claimed." Theosophists know that there can be no real conflict of interest among men. That which we do against the interests of others we do against our own soul. So any fancied right of our personality against another's interest must

rule to look before the paramount rights of our soul. Nor can we insist on that we struggle for ourselves.

But we ourselves are not the only ones concerned and here we must go back to the new, almost, ideals down, being-God-ways soul of L. B. F. and plant ourselves on its universal high mountaintune to that may seem. For rights are a relationship and as such have two sides, not "good and evil," nor "right of human and justice is not" but real moral rights for the possessor and obligation of the other party to respect them if they are rights. To possess rights does not make us possess them, does not even mean to ask for them. But we cannot deny that we, as men, have rights without denying that others, as men, have rights. We know that others have rights whether we have them ourselves or not, and that it is our obligation to respect them.

To repeat, the conception of the rights of man, the conception that has done away with slavery and to which we owe liberty and toleration, would turn the world centuries backward as to and toward the restoration of the brotherhood of man. We must respect the rights of others, must feel that with certain activities or possessions it is wrong for us to interfere. Whether these be of the personality or of the soul they must be respected. True, all rights are rights of the soul, but the personality is the creature of the soul, created not only that with pain to help the soul on its path and so that certain the rights of the soul inhere in the personality. Thus if we interfere the "rights" of the personality of another we at least are guilty both of impairing its usefulness to the soul. This is obviously so with the extreme case, murder.

Commonly we may feel that with the "rights" of our personality it is wrong for others to interfere. Here Theosophy and the modern theory of the rights of man part company. Is it wrong for us to infringe the rights of others? Yes, and we are the judge in our own persons. Is it wrong for others to act or not to act as toward us? How are we up? We cannot judge for them nor say that others are should or should not be this or that. Judge not, that ye be not judged. There may have visions of what we are grounds, rights before which our personal rights must take subsidence.

As was so well brought out in "The True Line of Duty," published some years ago in the Quarterly, our neighbor may owe for good reasons have been inspired to attempt to interfere with our actual when we are actually doing what is right. To seek anything but the personality as apart from the soul, is self seeking, and self-seeking and Theosophy are opposite poles.

Of the supreme right of man, of which L. B. F. wrote, the right to love the Master and become like Him, no power in the universe can rob us, whether we deny or affirm it as a right. But there are other rights which it behooves us not to deny, rights so generally conceded to-day that we forget they were won only after centuries of struggle, the right to spread the Light as we see it, to teach the love of the Master to others and to preach the Kingdom of Heaven among men.

J. F. B. M.

The Editor is glad to publish as well the following letter from a reader of the Quarterly in Milwaukee. It is a further reply to Question Qu, and the answers given to that question. The correspondent writes:

MILWAUKEE, WIS., NOV. 5, 1911.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

DEAR SIRS:

I was much interested in reading in the THEOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY for October, 1911, the four answers given to the question, "Does not the theosophical philosophy contradict the modern theories about the 'rights of man'?"

In after thought I put the question to myself, "Did G. Hijo, L. E. P., H. B. M. and K. D. P. have a right to their individual opinion?" Or in other words, "Can an expressed opinion of an individual be considered a man's right?"

If not, what's the use of trying to answer the original question?

If it can, who is going to be the judge to draw the dividing line, that shall say where the "rights of man" begin and end?

Does not individuality of character come from man's beliefs and opinions expressed or lived?

Jesus Christ undoubtedly considered it His right, to call the clothes on His back His; but if one wrongfully demanded them, He considered it an obligation on His part, not to resist evil, but yield to what the other considered his rights.

From this we would learn, that Jesus was willing to sacrifice His acknowledged right to material goods, for the sake of principle or a belief that in so doing He would overcome death.

Not only that, but when many considered it their right to crucify Him—instead of resisting evil He considered it an obligation on His part to sacrifice His right to live, in holding to the belief and opinion they could not kill His individuality of character, which He proved in His resurrection and ascension.

It seems to me the matter is pretty clearly summed up, by saying: Man has rights in material things, brought about through honest work, or there is no such thing as honesty or obligations to right and wrong: that the opinion man has as to these rights, actually lived, is what makes his individuality: that one's individuality is only rounded out and completed in an everlasting life, through a willingness to lose his life, even if holding to principle or his right to belief and opinion means the sacrifice of material rights.

If this letter can be shown to G. Hijo, L. E. P., H. B. M. and K. D. P., it would be a favor to the author, who is not a Theosophist, Christian Scientist, Catholic, Socialist, Republican or Democrat, but just a common, ordinary, everyday man, who would live his life after Christ's teachings.

Yours respectfully,

ERNEST L. HARDENBERGH.

QUESTION 131.—*Does anyone ever enjoy pain, or really feel that pain is joy?*

ANSWER.—Yes, of course. All pain ever suffered by anyone is enjoyed by some part of our being and the more enlightened we are the more parts of our being enjoy it. It is purely a question of understanding. We understand enough to enjoy the pain of sacrifice for someone we love. We enjoy, in one sense at least, the pain inflicted by a surgeon when he lances an ulcerated tooth; the red Indian enjoys torture for the pride of being able to endure it; we enjoy the keenest suffering which comes from true repentence; the saints enjoy the anguish of their ecstacies, about which they write so much. Life is full of illustrations of the love of pain whenever it is borne for some higher purpose, or for some stronger purpose; a case in point is that of the red Indian, already mentioned, who has a strong motive but not a high motive. It is purely a question of understanding.

The goodness of God would prevent anyone from suffering pain of any kind at any time unless that pain was for his good; if he really understood that he would enjoy the pain. G. HIJO.

ANSWER.—The psychologists tell us that the extremes of pain and the extremes of pleasure meet, and are indistinguishable. And the saints and martyrs are supposed really to find happiness, or rather pleasure, in the tortures inflicted upon them. But ordinary mortals can hardly be said to *enjoy* pain, it is a contradiction in terms. K. H.

ANSWER.—Hosts of people have felt that pain is joy. It is merely a question of the lower and higher self, or of the good of self and the good of others. If the lower self is stronger than the higher we prefer our own good to that of another; if the higher self is stronger we prefer the other's good. That is all there is to it. When we say that happiness is a by-product and can therefore only be attained by seeking something else, we are merely stating the truth that in all human nature the higher self—the divine principle—is so strong that it can not be ignored.

Pain doesn't amount to anything anyway. It is merely a bugaboo to scare us away from our high destiny. It is the iron gate which shuts us out of our fair ancestral garden. It is the flaming sword of the angel who stands at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. But it is a phantom gate and a phantom sword; it has no real existence. Bravely approach it and it disappears.

All depends on our consciousness, on the way we look at it. I remember once having suffered so much from so-called intellectual doubts that when a sharp physical pain came to me it was a relief. I enjoyed it. Compared to the other it was joy, and it was so strong that it took away the consciousness of the other pain. Yet I have known people who did not believe in the possibility of intellectual doubt producing pain. It all depends on where you are standing, whether you are more beast or more god. V. V. V.

ANSWER.—On the purely physical plane any alienist, psychologist or neurologist will answer, "Alas, yes, self-inflicted, ecstatically-enjoyed pain is too often a sign of morbidity." On the plane of the lower mind there is enjoyment of pain, especially when it is lowering, as in the case of the opium-fiend or the dipsomaniac. On a higher intellectual plane pain does not seem to be accepted as joy so frequently. On the spiritual plane many people actually do "enjoy pain" and "really feel that pain is joy." This point is rather fully covered in *Fragments*, especially pages 82 to 89 inclusive, with the solemn warning in the midde of page 87 and again on pages 19 *et seq.*, 29 and 32; at least these citations have proved satisfactory, even to those not interested in Theosophy.

There are two human analogies that suggest how pain might be taken as joy. The first is the feeling of a mother toward the pains before the birth of her child. Why should not the sufferer accept pain joyously as the sign of the gathering life and coming birth of the Soul? The second is the attitude of all science which to-day accepts pain and welcomes it as indicative of need in the human body and of means of supplying that need. If a patient welcomes the pain of surgery, to continue this rough analogy, in the body terrestrial; why not rejoice in pain as a sign of surgery in the body celestial, and joyously acclaim it as indicative of improvement? G. V. S. M.

ANSWER.—Yes. Where the pain is endured for others it may be a great joy. When one loves intensely there is an intense longing to give expression to that love. If, as sometimes happens in surgery, we were to have an opportunity to save the life of one we so loved by giving of our blood, the resulting pain would be the keenest joy. The pains of child-birth are often a wonderful joy. And we have all read of the joy the martyrs of history found in the extreme of pain suffered for love of the Master. T. J.

QUESTION 132.—*If the mind is properly trained from infancy, developing under the best influences, must it necessarily be in the way of spiritual advancement?*

ANSWER.—Since spiritual advancement means efforts towards perfection, why should a healthy well-trained mind be a barrier any more than a healthy well-

trained body? It would seem to be only so much work done on the way towards perfecting the instrument before the person waked up to consciousness as a soul, and to a consequent insight into the values of life.

If the transcending value is soul-vision it is clear that it cannot be reached by any process of the intellect, but neither can intellectual training prevent it. The great point is to keep clear the function of the Soul and of the mind. A mind with a habit of seeking truth and the discipline which proper training gives must be a good tool rather than a barrier.

If the mind is used as an end in itself it would, of course, be a barrier, but if it is used to find the answer to the great question of the modern world, "What is the end of evolution, where does it lead?"—the better its training the surer would it be to bring the enquirer to the borders of the region where alone the answer can be found.

Kant showed us for all time what the intellect could do and just where its powers stopped. It is quite possible to make its bounds clear and then its place in our make-up becomes evident and our respect for it considerably decreases.

B. P.

ANSWER.—An adequate answer to this question would require ancient wisdom. To the student the answer appears to depend upon a definition of terms. If by a "properly trained" mind is meant purely intellectual development the answer would seem to be an emphatic "no"; for ultimately the pent-up reactions would break out in one strong and definite revolt. If character training is, however, included there should be more hope of an affirmative reply; for a better instrument might result, through which the Soul could function. But in all this reasoning let us also recollect the 20th rule of the first series of *Light on the Path,* with its preliminary admonition "Seek it not by any one road." G. V. S. M.

ANSWER.—No faculty, *properly* trained, can be an impediment to spiritual advancement. All our faculties are necessary, but with none should we confuse our identity. Too often we consider that to train the mind is to enthrone it in the place of the Self. When this is done it is an impediment. Our minds must be our servants, not our masters, and should be trained as servants and kept to their own functions. H. B. M.

ANSWER.—There must be some deep significance in the insulation of the child from outside influence. In spite of wise and tender study and oversight, the child is the ceaseless mystery of the home. Those to whom he holds out the scepter are admitted to certain degrees of intimacy; they may "train" a little here, or mould a bit there. But ultimately the child's own reactions on what his elders try to do for him are the only significant features of the "training." To him action is all important. He meets us with an instructive readiness for what he needs most—the training of the will. We say to him "come learn." He replies "No, no, let's do——" If we could find wisdom enough to meet his demand with proper discipline for the will we should be doing something to make him "fit" for spiritual advancement. T. E. P.

QUESTION 133.—*How must the insanity and those perturbations and diseases inaccurately called* mental *be considered according to Theosophical principles? Are they the results of Karma created in another life? Are they indicative of possession by strange entities that use the Astral, etherous or dense body for realizing unknown purposes? Is the state in which they occur a form of the somnambulic state?*

ANSWER.—The various forms of brain-disease may be the result of many causes, some more or less physical, others purely mental, and some undoubtedly the outcome of Karmic law, of causes generated in a former life or lives. But we have been warned by Those who Know, never to ascribe anything to the result of another's Karma, as it is impossible for our limited intelligence to separate the tangled threads of destiny, and to trace their influence in our own lives or in the lives of others.

The less we meddle with "strange entities, that use the astral, ethereal or dense body, for realising unknown purposes" the less likely we are to be attacked by brain-disease of any kind. K. H.

ANSWER.—Insanity is a very broad term covering an immense range of abnormal mental states. It is said that everyone is more or less insane. This may be an over-statement of the case, but it is probably true that everyone is at least slightly insane at times. Not much is said in our books about the rationale of insanity. It seems probable that in the great majority of cases the trouble is with the connections between the brain and the mind. The co-ordination between the two, which must be perfect if we have a perfectly sane individual, becomes partly interrupted, or obstructed. It is apparent that there is an immense range in the extent to which this co-ordination may be interfered with; therefore there is an immense range in the kinds and types of insanity.

It is as if there were a rope connecting the brain and the mind composed of thousands of separate strings. For complete health they must all be alive and functioning. Now it is perfectly possible for some of these strings to be disconnected, or to be broken, or to cease to be adequate conductors of the nervous or vital impulse which must pass over or through them. Such conditions may be temporary, or may last any length of time. There may be one or a thousand of these strings in a disturbed and abnormal condition. We can see by this analogy how easy it is to account for the countless different kinds of diseased or abnormal mental states.

It is probable that if the rope connecting the brain and the mind be entirely broken we have the condition of complete idiocy. This may be congenital, or it may develop during life. It is also probable that when some of the strings are broken, the loose ends, as they float around in the psychic and kama-manasic planes of consciousness, can be seized and used by elementals and elementaries, and by all kinds of forces and influences; so we may have a person entirely sane in most ways, but with a queer and irrational streak. Probably the kind of influence which is attracted by a loose string is the kind of influence which that particular string was designed to transmit from brain to mind and *vice-versa*, but coming from outside the individual, and from a source not governed by conscience and will, it necessarily appears both irrational and immoral.

The astral body is of course the link between the brain and the mind and corresponds to the rope of many strings spoken of above. Insanity may, therefore, be considered a disorder of the astral body. Save when there is a complete separation between the mind and the brain, the disease is curable through the will, for the trained will absolutely controls the astral body. Modern science has discovered this fact and disordered mental states are now treated through the will.

E. C.